DEFENCE ABUSE RESPONSE TASKFORCE

Report on abuse in Defence
DEFENCE ABUSE RESPONSE TASKFORCE

Report on abuse in Defence
Dear Attorney-General and Minister

I am pleased to present the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce [Taskforce] Report on abuse in Defence. This report not only provides an update on the progress of the Taskforce as required under the Terms of Reference, but also contains detailed information about the nature and extent of abuse in Defence, based on the complaints received by the Taskforce. It is tabled alongside the Taskforce Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

This is my final report as Chair of the Taskforce. I was originally appointed in November 2012 for a 12-month term, and have accepted two extensions since then.

As is apparent from both this report and the Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy, the work of the Taskforce reflected a novel and innovative approach by the Government to a complex problem which was largely unresolvable by existing approaches and processes.

That innovative approach was also reflected in the leadership arrangements made by the Government.

All executive authority was vested in the Chair, to whom the Terms of Reference were directed. Separately, the Government appointed a Leadership Group of three members to advise and assist the Chair, and an independent Reparation Payments Assessor, to make decisions in relation to Reparation Payments.

As I leave, having completed the work I was asked to do, I wish to record my deep appreciation of and admiration for all the staff of the Taskforce under the leadership of the Executive Director, Mr Matt Hall. What they have achieved in two years has been unprecedented and outstanding. It has made a real, practical difference to the lives of hundreds, if not thousands, of people who suffered abuse in Defence and it has made – and will continue to make – a significant contribution to cultural change in Defence.
I acknowledge the real contribution made by them, and thank the members of the Leadership Group, Mr Robert Cornall AO, Ms Susan Halliday, and Assistant Commissioner (Australian Federal Police) Rudi Lammers APM, and the Reparation Payments Assessor, Ms Robyn Kruk AM, for their support and assistance.

I commend the present and former Governments for their unqualified, bipartisan support for the work of the Taskforce.

Finally, I once again thank all those who came forward to the Taskforce to share their account of abuse in Defence and to contribute to the effort to ensure that others in the future do not have to experience what they did.

Yours sincerely

The Honourable Len Roberts-Smith RFD, QC
Chair
Defence Abuse Response Taskforce
Contents

FOREWORD IX
GLOSSARY, ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS XI

PART A: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND 1
1. INTRODUCTION 2
2. NATURE AND EXTENT OF ABUSE IN DEFENCE 4
3. THE WORK OF THE TASKFORCE 9
  3.1 Establishment of the Taskforce 9
  3.2 Leadership of the Taskforce 10
  3.3 Assessment process and complainant support 11
  3.4 Taskforce outcomes 11
  3.5 Taskforce engagement with Defence and other agencies 12
  3.6 Other observations 13
4. LEGACY ISSUES AND ROYAL COMMISSION 14
  4.1 Royal Commission 14
  4.2 Legacy issues 15

PART B: TASKFORCE RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS OF ABUSE 17
5. INTRODUCTION TO THE WORK OF THE TASKFORCE 18
6. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION ABOUT THE TASKFORCE 19
7. TASKFORCE ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS 20
  7.1 The scope of the Taskforce 20
  7.2 The ‘plausibility’ threshold 25
  7.3 Reconsideration of decisions 25
8. TASKFORCE ENGAGEMENT WITH COMPLAINANTS 27
  8.1 Complainant support 27
  8.2 Unreasonable complainant conduct 28
  8.3 Representative organisations 28
  8.4 Administrative Access Scheme 29
  8.5 Impact on complainants of coming forward to the Taskforce 29
9. OUTCOMES AVAILABLE TO COMPLAINANTS

9.1 Defence Abuse Counselling Program
9.2 Defence Abuse Reparation Scheme
9.3 Defence Abuse Restorative Engagement Program
9.4 Referral to Commonwealth, State and Territory police agencies
9.5 Referral to Defence for disciplinary, administrative or other action

10. TASKFORCE ENGAGEMENT WITH DEFENCE

10.1 Engagement on Requests for Information
10.2 Engagement on Restorative Engagement
10.3 Engagement on sexual abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy in the 1990s
10.4 Engagement on Pathway to Change

11. TASKFORCE ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER AGENCIES

11.1 Australian Defence Force Investigative Service
11.2 Department of Veterans’ Affairs
11.3 Police Services
11.4 Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee

12. TASKFORCE FUNDING

12.1 Taskforce staffing

13. OTHER OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

13.1 DLA Piper Review – systemic issues and recommendations
13.2 Information and data sharing
13.3 Royal Commission

14. LEGACY ISSUES

14.1 Work of the Taskforce from 30 November 2014 to 30 June 2016
14.2 Work of the Taskforce after 30 June 2016

PART C: THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF ABUSE IN DEFENCE

15. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

15.1 Introduction
15.2 Background
15.3 Overview of complaints of abuse
15.4 Still serving alleged abusers
15.5 Statistical overview of complaints
16. COMPLAINTS OF ABUSE IN THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY 105
   16.1 Background to the Navy 105
   16.2 Overview of complaints of abuse in the Navy 107
   16.3 Statistical overview of complaints of abuse in the Navy 109
   16.4 Complaints of abuse in Navy recruit and employment training establishments 112
   16.5 Complaints of abuse during regular service in the Navy 128
   16.6 Locational case studies 140
   16.7 Individual case studies 146

17. COMPLAINTS OF ABUSE IN THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY 166
   17.1 Background to the Army 166
   17.2 Overview of complaints of abuse in the Army 168
   17.3 Statistical overview of complaints of abuse in the Army 169
   17.4 Complaints of abuse in Army recruit and employment training establishments 173
   17.5 Complaints of abuse during regular service in the Army 191
   17.6 Locational case studies 205
   17.7 Individual case studies 212

18. COMPLAINTS OF ABUSE IN THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE 234
   18.1 Background to the Air Force 234
   18.2 Overview of complaints of abuse in the Air Force 235
   18.3 Statistical overview of complaints of abuse in the Air Force 237
   18.4 Complaints of abuse in Air Force recruit and employment training establishments 241
   18.5 Complaints of abuse during regular service in the Air Force 254
   18.6 Locational case studies 265
   18.7 Individual case studies 269

19. COMPLAINTS OF ABUSE IN DEFENCE BETWEEN 2000 AND 2011 286
   19.1 Overview of complaints of abuse in Defence between 2000 and 2011 286
   19.2 Statistical overview of complaints of abuse in Defence between 2000 and 2011 288
   19.3 Complaints of abuse in the Navy between 2000 and 2011 292
   19.4 Complaints of abuse in the Army between 2000 and 2011 299
   19.5 Complaints of abuse in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011 305

20. COMPLAINTS OF ABUSE IN THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE 323
   20.1 Sexual abuse 324
   20.2 Sexual harassment 324
   20.3 Physical abuse 324
   20.4 Harassment and bullying 324
21. DEFENCE MANAGEMENT OF ABUSE
   21.1 Taskforce approach to management of abuse by Defence
   21.2 Statistics regarding Defence management
   21.3 Defence management when abuse was reported to Defence
   21.4 Defence management when abuse was not reported to Defence

22. IMPACTS OF ABUSE ON COMPLAINANTS
   22.1 Impacts at the time of the abuse
   22.2 Longer-term impacts

APPENDIX A: TASKFORCE TERMS OF REFERENCE
APPENDIX B: PLAUSIBILITY FACT SHEET
APPENDIX C: FEEDBACK FROM COMPLAINANTS
APPENDIX D: LOCATIONS AND ESTABLISHMENTS
Foreword

[The officer] castigated me for the [intoxicated] condition I was in. My mate tried to tell him we were alright and that we did not need any help. He was trying to protect me. [The officer] ordered him to leave and said that he would take care of me. [The officer's] room was at the top of the stairs which led to our sleeping mess. He ordered me into his room and then locked the door. In his cabin he attempted to have oral sex with me and then brutally raped me. I found out later that [the officer] had a reputation on the ship for sexually molesting junior sailors.
(Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1990s)

From his arrival [the Corporal] would have sexually explicit conversations about women on a daily basis. Conversational topics included forced sodomy, intercourse with under-age girls and degrading women sexually. There are some of his specific comments I can recall, which include "if she's old enough to bleed, she's old enough to breed" and "hit 'em before the hair does", in relation to under-age girls. Once, referring to forced sodomy on women, he said "make 'em squeal like a pig". [The Corporal] allowed pornographic material such as magazines and mobile phone videos to be viewed and shared in the workplace. I did object to this several times, but was always laughed at.
(Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s)

It happened many, many times. I remember these nights vividly to be so violent, so scary, and so traumatising but I can also still feel the "helplessness" of being alone with the inability to defend myself after being completely startled by being bashed awake from sleep with so many men wanting their chance at bashing me.
(Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1970s)

For almost two years, the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce (Taskforce) has worked directly with people who suffered abuse in Defence, gathering first-hand accounts of their experiences and providing practical outcomes to help deal with the impact that abuse has had on their lives.

The Taskforce has received approximately 2400 complaints of abuse in Defence. These complaints relate to abuse occurring in each service, across every decade since the 1940s. Some have told the Taskforce of experiencing repeated acts of physical violence, such as 'scrubbings' with hard-bristled brushes, 'running the gauntlet', or punishments meted out by informal 'Kangaroo courts' convened by groups of peers. Some described disturbing instances of sexual abuse, including having grease or boot polish applied to their genitals, having an object such as a broom or mop handle forced into their anus, or sexual assaults carried out by more senior members of Defence in positions of trust and power over the complainant. Many described relentless and degrading harassment and bullying, with individuals particularly targeted for abuse as a result of their gender, age, race, workplace performance, sexuality or perceived sexuality, physical limitations and illness and injury.

In a large number of cases, this abuse occurred at the very beginning of the complainant's careers, at the hands of their peers in the context of an informal hierarchy operating within recruit or training establishments. In other cases, complainants experienced multiple types of abuse throughout their time at Defence, across various Defence establishments.

This report provides an overview of what the Taskforce has learned about the nature and extent of abuse in Defence, based on the complaints it has received. These complaints relate to abuse occurring in all three primary Defence services – the Royal Australian Navy, Australian Army and Royal Australian Air Force. It is clear that unique practices of abuse thrived in each service, informed by the specific circumstances and environment, passed down between generations or 'learned' by people who suffered abuse themselves.
Although the complaints of abuse peaked in the 1970s and 1980s, it is important to make clear that the abuse discussed in this report is not merely a historical issue. The Taskforce has found that high levels of abuse have persisted in the 1990s and 2000s. This abuse continues to be disproportionately experienced by women, particularly in cases of sexual abuse and harassment.

It is impossible to read or listen to the personal accounts that have been included in this report without being affected. On behalf of the Taskforce, I would like to thank all those who have come forward to the Taskforce. Each person who has broken their silence about the abuse they suffered has made an important contribution to Defence’s ongoing efforts to achieve cultural change.

It is to be expected that members of the community reading this report will be appalled by the abuse described and will want to know what is being done about it.

This report provides an overview of the work that the Taskforce has done to provide individuals with outcomes tailored to their personal circumstances. These outcomes may include counselling; a Reparation Payment of up to $50,000; a facilitated conference with a senior Defence representative; or referral to civilian police or to the Chief of the Defence Force for administrative or disciplinary action. The feedback received by the Taskforce to date indicates that these outcomes are having a positive impact on the lives of complainants.

Under the Taskforce Terms of Reference, I am required to make a recommendation to the Minister for Defence and Attorney-General in relation to whether a Royal Commission is merited into any categories of abuse received by the Taskforce, in particular the 24 Australian Defence Force Academy cases noted by DLA Piper. These cases are discussed in detail in the Taskforce Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy, which is tabled alongside this report.

This report includes a detailed discussion of what the public would expect from such a Royal Commission and what is possible in reality. Based on these considerations, the Taskforce recommends that the Government establish a Royal Commission to inquire into, report and make recommendations in respect of allegations of abuse, and the management of reports of allegations of abuse, at ADFA from its inception to the present day.

As this report makes clear, the Taskforce’s work is not yet complete. It is the Taskforce’s view that it would be premature to make any recommendation about a Royal Commission into abuse in Defence more generally until this work is complete.

The Taskforce acknowledges that it in recent years Defence has demonstrated an institutional commitment to achieving cultural change. However, the accounts of abuse related in this report are deeply disturbing and deserving of serious consideration. It is the Taskforce’s hope that this report will assist Defence in its ongoing efforts to prevent, stop and respond to abuse.

The Honourable Len Roberts-Smith RFD, QC
Chair
Defence Abuse Response Taskforce
Glossary

**Arseholing** – similar to bishing or room tossing, a practice which involved vandalising the room or property of an individual, carried out by other individuals with or without malicious intent. Methods and materials used to carry out arseholing were varied, commonly involving emptying water and other liquids, spraying with fire hoses or shaving cream, or emptying the contents of cupboards and draws.

**Bastardisation** – in the context of training and educational institutions, an umbrella term referring to bullying, harassment, victimisation and illegitimate initiation practices.

**Bed tipping** – also known as rumbling, a practice that involved an individual’s bed being rolled upside down or up-ended during the night, causing the individual to be thrown out of bed.

**Bishing** – similar to arseholing or room tossing, a practice which involved other individuals interfering with or destroying an individual’s room or property.

**Blackballing** – also known as greasing or nuggetting, a practice that involved an individual being held down by other individuals while boot polish, toothpaste or another substance was forcibly smeared on their genitals or anal area, sometimes with a hard brush.

**Blanket bashing** – a practice that involved an individual having a blanket thrown over their head while in bed and subsequently being physically assaulted.

**Bunny-hopping** – a training or disciplinary practice that involved an individual being required to squat and then jump high repeatedly, often for prolonged periods of time.

**Chemical bath** – also known as a grot bath, a practice that involved an individual being forced into a bath filled with a mixture of toxic cleaning chemicals and then scrubbed with hard-bristled brooms, scrubbing brushes, or abrasive cleaning products by a group.

**Chit** – a card advising of medical treatment required by or medical limitation that applies to an ADF member.

**Chooking** – a practice involving butting-out a cigarette on an individual’s wet backside.

**Crocodiles and alligators** – a practice that involved an individual being made to hang onto the rafters of the roof so that they were suspended from the ground. Another (usually more senior) individual would then ask ‘crocodiles or alligators?’ and the individual would be punched regardless of their answer, with the intention of seeing how much pain they could endure before letting go of the rafters and falling to the floor.

**Crossing the line ceremony** – an initiation rite that commemorated a sailor’s first crossing of the Equator, which could involve physical challenges and humiliations such as being covered in slime. Sailors who had already crossed the line were nicknamed Shellbacks and those who had not were called Pollywogs. The ceremonies typically featured a King Neptune.

**Crucifixion** – also known as a Jesus shower, a practice that involved putting a broom handle through the arms of an individual’s uniform, and pinning down, duct taping or hanging the individual into place. Often involved pouring or spraying water or other liquid over the individual, sometimes using a fire hydrant until the uniform tears.

**Doubling / marching at double time** – a training or disciplinary practice that involved an individual being required to conduct a fast march or trot, often around a parade ground and for prolonged periods of time.

**Duck-waddling** – a training or disciplinary practice that involved an individual being required to squat and walk at a low stoop, often for prolonged periods of time.
Elephant walk – a practice whereby a group of individuals were forced to form a single file line, insert their thumbs into the anus of the individual in front of them, and parade around the building (like elephants in a line joining trunk to tail).

Evacuate – a game involving diving out of a window on command.

Equity Officer / Adviser – a staff member who acts as a contact point to provide support and advice in relation to unacceptable behaviour issues.

Filled in – being physically assaulted or beaten.

Fire hosing – also known as sprog washing, a practice that involved taping up the arms and one leg of an individual’s uniform, placing a fire hydrant in the remaining leg, and turning on the hydrant until the uniform filled with water.

Gargoyling – a practice whereby an individual was made to urinate in their own mouth, or have another person urinate into their mouth.

Greasing – see Blackballing.

Gronk and shame book – a book where male individuals publicly recorded their sexual exploits with women.

Grot bath – see Chemical bath.

Hazing – also known as initiation, practices to which individuals were subjected upon entry to the Defence force, which could range from good-humoured to violent or abusive.

Hot and cold iron – a practice that involved holding a hot iron close to an individual’s skin, only to be replaced with a cold item at the last moment to create a burning sensation. In a variation of this practice, a towel saturated with hot water was sometimes placed on an individual’s face while a hot steam iron was held next to their head, in order to create a sensation of drowning.

Human 10 pins – a game in which a group of individuals were made to stand at the end of an accommodation hut, while other (usually more senior) individuals ran down the aisle with the intent of knocking the individuals over.

Jacking – making a complaint about another individual to a staff member, perceived as disloyalty. The term also refers to the practice of cutting into queues ahead of others who had been waiting for longer periods of time.

Jesus shower – see Crucifixion.

Kangaroo court – a practice whereby a number of (usually more senior) individuals arranged themselves as an informal forum resembling a court and delivered punishments to other individuals in the form of bullying, violent or abusive behaviours.

Leaps – also known as splits, a practice requiring individuals to change from one uniform to another very quickly. This was often overseen by more senior individuals, who would increase the number of changes and shorten the allocated time in order to increase pressure.

Lines – accommodation areas.

Malingering – a derogatory term used to describe individuals who do not or cannot meet acceptable standards of physical fitness, academic, military and/or social performance.

Padre / Chaplain – a person who provides pastoral care.

Piss parade – a practice whereby a number of individuals were made to stand in a single line “on parade” and ordered to urinate (“piss”). Those who were unwilling or unable to urinate had a hose forced into their mouths.

Nuggetting – see Blackballing.

Room tossing – see Arseholing.
The royal flush – a practice that involved a group of individuals holding the head of another individual in a toilet bowl and flushing the toilet, sometimes after the toilet had been used.

Rumbling – see Bed tipping.

Running the gauntlet / gauntlets – a practice that involved a group of individuals arranging themselves into two lines facing each other, usually along a corridor or staircase, while holding heavy items. Other individuals would be forced to run through the centre of the lines while being beaten with the heavy items by the individuals standing on either side of them.

Sadie-ing – also known as vacuuming or woofering, a practice which involved several individuals restraining another individual, forcibly applying a vacuum cleaner hose to their genitals and switching the power on.

Scrubbing / Regimental scrub – a practice whereby individuals would forcibly scrub the body of another individual, using harsh and abrasive materials such as hard-bristled brooms, scrubbing brushes, steel wool, or cleaning products. In some instances, this involved the targeted individual being physically constrained by being tied to a frame during the scrubbing.

Spinner – a game in which an individual was made to stand on a chair while being punched.

Splits – see Leaps.

Snowdropping – a practice whereby an individual’s underwear would be stolen from the clothes line and returned the next day covered in excrement.

Sprog washing – see Firehosing.

Thonging – a practice similar to running the gauntlet, but involving the use of rubber thongs to beat individuals forced to run through the centre of two formed lines. This was usually performed without shirts on, and on some occasions the thongs were frozen prior to the event in order to cause more pain.

Vacuuming – see Sadie-ing.

Woofering – see Sadie-ing.
Abbreviations and acronyms

ADF – Australian Defence Force
ADFIS – Australian Defence Force Investigative Service
ARA – Australian Regular Army
AWOL – Absent Without Official Leave
CAPT – Captain
CDF – Chief of Defence Force
CDRE – Commodore
CO – Commanding Officer
COL – Colonel
CPL – Corporal
DART / Taskforce – Defence Abuse Response Taskforce
DO – Divisional officer
E & D – Equity and Diversity
MP – Military Police
NCO – Non-commissioned officer
PTSD – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RAAF – Royal Australian Air Force
RAN – Royal Australian Navy
RAP – Regimental Aid Post
SeMPRO – Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office
WGCDR – Wing Commander
WO – Warrant Officer
XO – Executive Officer
PART A: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
1. Introduction

The Defence Abuse Response Taskforce (Taskforce) was established on 26 November 2012 as part of the Australian Government’s response to the DLA Piper Review into allegations of sexual or other forms of abuse in Defence (DLA Piper Review).¹

In total, the Taskforce has received approximately 2400 complaints of abuse in Defence. These complaints contain disturbing accounts of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, physical abuse and harassment and bullying, dating back to the 1940s.

This report tells the story of these complaints of abuse in Defence, including both the nature and extent of the abuse reported, and of the steps that the Taskforce has taken to respond to these complaints of abuse.

This report does not include an analysis of complaints of abuse reported to have occurred at the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA). These complaints are considered in the Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy, which is tabled alongside this report.

The Taskforce recognises that there is a significant institutional commitment within Defence to address the issues relating to abuse. Defence is currently implementing a strategy for cultural change within Defence, largely through the Pathway to Change strategy. As discussed in Part B of this report, Pathway to Change seeks to address the findings of a number of independent reviews into different aspects of Defence culture.

The Taskforce also acknowledges that many members of Defence did not experience abuse during their time in service. However, as this report will demonstrate, the Taskforce has received a significant number of complaints of serious acts of abuse carried out within all services in Defence, both historically and up until the Taskforce’s cut-off date of 11 April 2011. The abuse has not been limited to one place or service, but has occurred for decades within Defence establishments across Australia and while members were serving overseas on deployment. This report:

• Details the nature and extent of abuse in Defence reflected in complaints received by the Taskforce
  This report describes the patterns of abuse that are apparent in complaints to the Taskforce. It provides an analysis of the nature and extent of abuse reported to the Taskforce, both by service and by type of abuse. Complaints made to the Taskforce suggest that abuse in Defence has been pervasive and widespread, and indicate that there are clear patterns of abuse occurring not only in Defence broadly, but also within some services or establishments. An understanding of the kind of abuse that has occurred in the past, and the kind of abuse that is still prevalent within Defence today, is fundamental to efforts by Defence to prevent, stop, and respond to abuse in the future.

• Explores the issues arising in Defence’s management of reports of abuse reflected in complaints received by the Taskforce
  Complainants repeatedly told the Taskforce that the manner in which Defence responded in situations where complainants made a report of the abuse that they had experienced, or where Defence knew or should reasonably have known abuse was occurring, was critically important. A significant number of complaints have been assessed as including one or more plausible cases of Defence mismanagement. An understanding of the patterns arising in Defence’s management of reports of abuse, and of the factors contributing to the under-reporting of abuse, is also fundamental to efforts to prevent, stop and respond to abuse in the future.

• Provides a public record of complainants’ accounts of abuse in Defence
  This report is based on personal accounts of abuse. Each complainant who has come forward to the Taskforce has described in their own words the abuse that they experienced during their time in Defence. Many complainants have consented to their personal accounts of abuse being quoted, and this report includes numerous first hand accounts of abuse. Some of these complainants have never before spoken of the abuse that they suffered, even to family and friends. This document provides an important public record of abuse reported to have occurred in Defence.
• **Outlines the work of the Taskforce**

The Taskforce has worked to provide outcomes to complainants as a way to address the consequences of the abuse suffered. The outcomes provided in response to each complaint depend upon the preferences and personal circumstances of complainants, but may include counselling, a Reparation Payment of up to $50,000, participation in a facilitated conference with a senior Defence representative, referral of appropriate matters to civilian police or referral to the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) for consideration of administrative or disciplinary action. This report also contains the Taskforce’s recommendations in relation to the question of whether a Royal Commission would be merited into any categories of allegations considered by the Taskforce. Finally, it contains discussion about the operation of the Taskforce beyond 30 November 2014.

As required under the Terms of Reference, the Taskforce has provided quarterly reports to the Attorney-General and Minister for Defence, outlining the progress that has been made in delivering these outcomes and to contribute to Defence’s ongoing efforts to prevent, stop and respond to abuse.

While this report includes an overview and update on the work of the Taskforce, it differs from the seven interim reports that have preceded it for a number of reasons. All of the Taskforce’s outcome programs are now fully operational and all major policy decisions and contract procurement processes have now been completed. In addition, when this report is tabled in Parliament, the current Chair of the Taskforce, the Hon Len Roberts-Smith RFD QC will conclude his term, having already accepted two extensions. At the time of drafting, the Attorney-General, Senator the Hon George Brandis QC, and Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon David Johnston, are expected to soon announce their decision regarding the leadership of the Taskforce beyond 30 November 2014.

For these reasons it is appropriate for the Taskforce to release a more detailed report containing information about both the content of the complaints it has received, and the Taskforce’s work in responding to these complaints of abuse.

It is important to note that in compiling this report, the Taskforce has been careful to work within its Terms of Reference. As noted above, the primary function of the Taskforce is to assess and respond to individual cases of alleged abuse in Defence. The Terms of Reference also require that the Taskforce advise Defence on the implications of its work for the Pathway to Change strategy. However, the Taskforce is not an inquiry body charged with making recommendations for reform. As such, this report does not include recommendations for change within Defence. However, the Taskforce hopes that it will serve as an important resource document for Defence and for other agencies that have a role in progressing cultural change within Defence, as well as increasing the public understanding of the experiences of those who suffered abuse in Defence by committing their personal stories to the public record.

The Taskforce trusts that the information contained within this report will have a profound impact on Defence. The stories contained in this report are deeply affecting. They should further inspire Defence leadership to take every measure possible to prevent, stop and respond to abuse occurring anywhere within Defence.


---

2. Nature and extent of abuse in Defence

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 2224 cases raising plausible allegations of abuse [made by more than 1650 complainants]. The Taskforce has categorised the abuse experienced by each complainant as forming one or more ‘cases’ of abuse. Generally, one case relates to abuse experienced at one location. Many complainants experienced multiple cases of abuse.

Complaints to the Taskforce have revealed some marked patterns of abuse in Defence, and include some allegations of extremely serious abuse. This abuse has had very significant impacts on those who were subjected to it, both at the time of the abuse and throughout their lives after Defence.

The Taskforce recognises that there will be many people in Defence who have never experienced or witnessed abuse. However, complaints to the Taskforce indicate that abuse in Defence has been and is both serious and widespread. Furthermore, it is also very likely that a significant number of people who have experienced abuse in Defence have not come forward to the Taskforce, and may never reveal their experiences of abuse during their time in Defence.

The following overarching conclusions can be drawn about the nature and extent of abuse in Defence as indicated by complaints to the Taskforce. All conclusions are based on the substance of complaints to the Taskforce. The statistical analysis provided in this report relates to complaints assessed as at September 2014 as raising a plausible allegation of abuse. The work of the Taskforce is not complete, and the statistics provided in this report will necessarily change when the Taskforce analysis of all complaints is finalised. The Taskforce recognises that the number of complainants is a small proportion of the total number of people who have served in Defence over the time period considered, and that the statistical information available to the Taskforce should not be directly extrapolated to make definitive conclusions about the nature and extent of abuse occurring in Defence generally. However, the complaints received by the Taskforce do show some broad trends and some specific patterns and practices of abuse:

- **Widespread sexual abuse, sexual harassment, physical abuse, and harassment and bullying have occurred across Defence services throughout the decades.**

  - The Taskforce received widespread reports of abuse that occurred between the 1940s and 2011. The highest number of complaints received by the Taskforce across all services involved abuse that occurred during the 1970s and 1980s, with the highest number of overall complaints relating to the 1980s. High levels of abuse have persisted throughout all three primary services in the more recent decades of the 1990s and 2000s.

  - The highest number of cases of abuse involved abuse reported to have occurred in the Australian Army (Army) [879 cases], followed by the Royal Australian Navy (Navy) [861 cases], and the Royal Australian Air Force (Air Force) [378 cases]. However, the Navy is significantly overrepresented in complaints of abuse; cases relating to abuse in the Navy account for 39 per cent of all cases of abuse, even though there are currently half as many Navy personnel as Army personnel and approximately the same number of Navy and Air Force personnel.

  - The highest number of complaints of abuse in the Navy related to abuse occurring in the 1960s and 1970s; and the highest number of complaints of abuse in each of the Army and Air Force related to abuse occurring in the 1980s.

  - Complaints received by the Taskforce indicate that a concerning amount of sexual abuse has occurred in the Navy, with cases involving sexual abuse comprising almost half of all cases of abuse in the Navy. Similarly, the highest number of cases of sexual harassment were reported to have occurred in the Navy. Certain other types of abuse were reported as commonplace within Navy recruit and employment training establishments, including ‘bed tipping’, ‘nuggettering’, and ‘running the gauntlet’. In addition, the Taskforce is concerned about the high number of complaints of abuse on ships, as well as the practice of initiation rituals which in some cases appear to demonstrate how certain hazing rituals have evolved within the Navy over time.
Complaints received by the Taskforce suggest a high incidence of physical abuse in the Army, with almost half of all complaints of abuse in the Army involving plausible allegations of physical abuse. There is a significant overrepresentation of women who have experienced abuse in the Army, with women comprising 25 per cent of those making a complaint of abuse in the Army, while women comprised only 10 per cent of all Army personnel in 2010–11 – the smallest proportion of any service. The Taskforce is particularly concerned about the extent and nature of abuse that was carried out in the context of hazing or initiation by groups of senior peers at the Army Apprentice School at Balcombe.

Complaints received by the Taskforce suggest that a concerning amount of harassment and bullying has occurred in the Air Force, carried out by direct supervisors, training instructors or individuals in considerable positions of authority. This has often involved deliberate and malicious attempts to belittle, ostracise, isolate and undermine complainants, as well as attempts to sabotage or prevent a complainant’s career progression and advancement in the service. The Air Force is also the service with the highest overrepresentation of women who have experienced abuse, with women comprising 37 per cent of those making a complaint of abuse in the Air Force, while women comprised only 17 per cent of all Air Force personnel in 2010–11. The Taskforce is also concerned about the high number of complaints relating to sexual abuse and sexual harassment experienced by women in the Air Force, especially in recent years.

The Taskforce received a small number of complaints involving abuse in the Department of Defence, with most of these complaints concerning abuse occurring in recent years.

A significant amount of abuse in Defence reported to the Taskforce occurred between 2000 and 2011.

Complaints of abuse suggest that levels of abuse have remained high in all services from 2000 to 2011. Most abuse reported to have occurred in this decade took place when complainants were engaged in regular service, rather than during initial recruit and employment training.

Women are significantly overrepresented in complaints of abuse between 2000 and 2011, particularly in cases of sexual abuse and sexual harassment. This is particularly concerning given that women comprise only a small proportion of all Defence personnel.

In most complaints of abuse during recent years, abuse was carried out by persons of higher rank, including reports from multiple complainants within each service who experienced abuse at the hands of the same alleged abuser who had developed a reputation for abuse within the service.

There are some differences in the most prevalent forms of abuse within each of the services between 2000-2011 as reported by complainants; including a high incidence of sexual abuse and sexual harassment in the Navy, high rates of physical abuse in the Army, and high rates of harassment and bullying in both the Air Force and the Army. There are more instances of abuse of a covert, private and insidious nature in recent years.

The use of technology has been a particular feature of abuse in recent years, including harassment and bullying via email, Facebook or other forms of social media.

Complaints to the Taskforce include some extremely serious allegations of abuse.

Sexual abuse was reported in 38 per cent of all cases of abuse assessed by the Taskforce.

- Sexual abuse in earlier decades was more likely to involve degrading and humiliating acts experienced by young boys and carried out by groups of their peers, often in the context of initiation or hazing practices during initial recruit and employment training. This included forced stripping and nakedness, the application of grease or boot polish to the genitals, forced masturbation or being masturbated in front of and ejaculated on, and anal penetration with objects including brooms and mop handles.
Incidents of sexual abuse in more recent decades have typically involved a single alleged abuser, who, in many cases, was in a position of considerable authority over the complainant at the time of the abuse. Women are overrepresented as the subjects of sexual abuse in more recent decades. Cases of sexual abuse of both male and female complainants during the 2000s include some particularly violent incidents of sexual assault in the form of anal and vaginal penetration, digital penetration and forced oral sex, and some cases where complainants were filmed or recorded without their consent while in a state of undress.

Almost half the total number of complaints received by the Taskforce involved incidents of physical abuse. There appears to have been a culture of violent initiation or hazing in initial recruit and employment training establishments across decades and across the services, such as ‘running the gauntlet’, ‘bed tipping’ and ‘blanket bashing’, as well as ‘scrubbing’ with hard-bristled brushes.

In complaints relating to regular service, physical violence appears to have been considered a way of resolving minor disputes, and there is a high incidence of physical assault by peers, as well as assault with the purpose of reinforcing positions of authority, dominance and control. The Taskforce also received a number of complaints of abuse in the context of initiation ceremonies and rituals that involved particularly violent acts of physical abuse and sometimes sexual abuse.

Complaints to the Taskforce reveal some distinct patterns of abuse.

Some very specific abusive practices are reported to have occurred across all services, sometimes appearing in different services at different times. These include, for example, blanket bashing, bed tipping, scrubbing, and running the gauntlet.

Many complainants told the Taskforce that more senior serving members, particularly staff in recruit and training establishments, tacitly accepted the occurrence of abuse. This may be indicative of a culture that permits or enables abusive practices to continue from one generation to another.

It appears that abuse was very often carried out by members of Defence in positions of actual or perceived seniority or authority over complainants at the time of the abuse, in both initial recruit and employment training establishments, as well as in regular service.

Complainants to the Taskforce also revealed that abuse is perpetuated through the manner in which abusive behaviours are ‘learned’ by those who have been subjected to abuse. In some cases abuse against specific individuals was perpetuated across locations and sometimes across services. Some complainants reported that after being subjected to abuse, they went on to abuse others.

Many complainants experienced abuse during the initial stages of their careers in Defence, particularly in training establishments.

The Taskforce is particularly concerned about the high number of complaints relating to the abuse of children and young people, with 62 per cent of cases involving complainants who were aged 21 years or under at the time of the abuse, including 27 per cent of cases involving complainants who were under 18 years of age at the time of the abuse.

The abuse of children and young people included a high number of very serious allegations of both sexual and physical abuse.

Abuse particularly thrived in circumstances in which young boys were left largely unsupervised after-hours, and where senior peers assumed certain disciplinary responsibilities and actual or apprehended authority over newer intakes, as well as the right to exercise additional privileges, including access to and consequent abuse of alcohol.

It is particularly concerning that members of Defence in a supervisory role adopted an attitude which fostered many of these types of abuse or at least allowed it to perpetuate, and which discouraged the reporting of abuse.
Women are overrepresented in complaints of abuse across all services in Defence, and especially in more recent decades.

- Complaints regarding abuse of women in the Navy, Army and Air Force suggest the existence of a particularly discriminatory culture and the perpetuation of negative attitudes towards the participation of women in Defence which continues to persist in the present day.
- Alarmingly, women were the subjects of abuse in 43 per cent of cases assessed by the Taskforce that occurred between 1990 and the Taskforce cut-off date in 2011.
- It appears to be the case that sexual abuse occurring in Defence in recent decades has been experienced almost entirely by women. This includes serious acts of sexual assault by members of Defence of superior rank to the complainant, in circumstances in which alleged abusers deliberately used their positions of authority as a means of intimidation and to coerce female complainants into performing sexual acts.
- The Taskforce is also concerned about the high numbers of complaints of sexual harassment of women in Defence. Abuse of women in more recent decades appears to be more personal and targeted, and in many ways less overt than the types of sexual harassment exhibited during the 1970s and 1980s when women initially entered the services.

Complaints to the Taskforce reveal that a number of key factors have contributed to abuse occurring in Defence.

- The ingrained nature of both formal and unofficial hierarchies has often restricted or removed the ability of complainants to report abuse through the chain of command.
- In the high stress environment of serving on deployment, both the risk of abuse is potentially higher and the ability to report abuse is impeded because complainants are isolated, separated from social and familial ties of support, and appear to be increasingly reliant on the chain of command.
- The lack of adequate supervision of young people emerged as a common feature in complaints of abuse, particularly during initial recruit and employment training. Most of these serious acts of abuse took place in residential accommodation environments outside of regular training hours.
- Complainants reported that particular factors which marked them out as ‘different’ within their training cohort or among their colleagues increased their risk of being targeted for abuse, including gender, age, race, workplace performance, sexuality or perceived sexuality, physical limitations, and illness or injury.
- The misuse of alcohol and other substances has been a common feature of complaints of abuse both in initial recruit and employment training and during regular service.

There has been significant under-reporting of abuse in Defence.

- Complainants told the Taskforce that their own experience, or the treatment of others that they witnessed or heard about, reinforced the understanding that reporting was either ‘pointless’, or that the repercussions for reporting abuse were often particularly severe.
- Many complainants expressed a strong belief that members of senior rank and Defence more generally were aware of the abuse, particularly within initial recruit and employment training establishments, and knowingly took no action to address or prevent it.
- Abuse was enabled to flourish within a context in which individuals knew that acts of abuse could go unpunished, and abuse was implicitly condoned by the institution of Defence itself.

Defence has mismanaged reports of abuse in a significant number of cases.

- The Taskforce has found that Defence adequately managed actual reports of abuse in a small number of cases. However, on the whole, the Taskforce has found that Defence mismanaged many actual reports of abuse, including by taking no action, or inappropriate or inadequate action, in response to reports of abuse.
• In a large proportion of cases where complainants did not make an actual report of abuse, the Taskforce has nonetheless found that Defence mismanaged a constructive report of abuse, in situations where the circumstances of the abuse contributed to a complainant not making a report about the abuse and/or Defence knew or ought to have known about the abuse.

• Many complaints received by the Taskforce suggest that there has been an unwillingness on the part of Defence to consider administrative or disciplinary action against alleged abusers while either military or civilian police investigations were under way, even though that option was available to them.

• Many complainants did not make a formal report of abuse due to a culture within Defence that did not support the reporting of abuse. In many cases this was exacerbated by the absence of effective reporting mechanisms.

• Some complainants told the Taskforce of the feelings of shame and stigma attached with having been abused, particularly within the Defence environment which considered the reporting of abuse to be a sign of weakness.

• In many cases, complainants were also directly threatened against reporting abuse, and incidents of abuse went unreported on account of the perceived risk of being subjected to further abuse, or perceived risk to the complainant’s career in Defence.

• The nature of the abuse experienced by complainants itself contributed to under-reporting, especially where the abuse was implicitly condoned by members of staff or where it was carried out by supervisors or high-ranking officers in the chain of command.

**Abuse in Defence has had serious and long lasting impacts.**

• Abuse in Defence has had very serious impacts on the lives and careers of those who experienced it, both at the time of the abuse and for many years afterwards. Immediate impacts included both significant physical injuries and psychological impacts, including feelings of fear, isolation, betrayal and distrust.

• Many of those who experienced abuse in Defence are still suffering the impacts today. Long-term impacts of abuse include the ongoing effects of physical injuries, severe emotional distress, ruined careers, relationship break downs, drug and alcohol addictions, psychological disorders, suicidal ideation, social isolation and many others.
3. The work of the Taskforce

Since its inception, the primary focus of the Taskforce has been to provide practical outcomes to those who came forward with a complaint of abuse in Defence.

Part B of this report provides an overview of the work of the Taskforce, including detailed information about the assessment process and the innovative national programs that have been developed in order to provide outcomes to complainants. The content of this part of the report is similar to that generally included in the Taskforce’s quarterly reports. However, it has been drafted to provide a picture of how a complaint progresses through the Taskforce’s processes towards an outcome.

As Part B makes clear, the Taskforce was not designed to conduct investigations. It does not make legally-binding determinations or give directions to Defence or anyone else. However, what the Taskforce can do is provide a range of outcomes to individuals who have made complaints of abuse, which might not otherwise be available through legal or administrative processes. The Taskforce provides an opportunity for a victim to have their account of abuse heard, accepted as true, and acknowledged as wrong, and to be provided with a practical outcome.

The Taskforce was never intended by the Government to be a permanent entity, as discussed in greater detail in the context of legacy issues at section 4.2. This intention was made clear in March 2013, when the then Minister for Defence announced that people would have until 31 May 2013 to register a new complaint of abuse with the Taskforce. Part B opens by providing an overview of the activities that were taken to encourage people who suffered abuse in Defence prior to April 2011 to register with the Taskforce.

3.1 Establishment of the Taskforce

In April 2011, the so-called ‘Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) Skype incident’ triggered numerous allegations of sexual and other forms of abuse in Defence. In response to these allegations, the former Minister for Defence, the Hon Stephen Smith MP, announced an external review of allegations of sexual and other abuse in Defence.

The then Secretary of the Department of Defence, Dr Ian Watt, commissioned law firm DLA Piper to conduct an independent review into these allegations and to develop recommendations for further action (DLA Piper Review).

Between April and October 2011, DLA Piper received communications about alleged abuse from 1112 people. Of these, 1095 discrete allegations of abuse, raised by 775 sources, fell within the scope of the review and were assessed. DLA Piper also considered systemic issues and made recommendations for further action to the Minister for Defence. These systemic issues are discussed in more detail at section 13.1.

DLA Piper considered that the overwhelming majority of the allegations received formed plausible allegations of sexual or other forms of abuse by Defence personnel.

On 7 March 2012, the former Minister for Defence, Secretary for Defence and CDF jointly announced a strategy for cultural change and reinforcement in Defence through the Pathway to Change strategy.

The Taskforce was established on 26 November 2012 as part of the Government’s response to the DLA Piper Review.

The scope of the work of the Taskforce is guided by the Terms of Reference (Appendix A). Under the Terms of Reference, the Taskforce is required to assess the findings of the DLA Piper Review and the material gathered by that review. It is also required to assess any additional material available to the Taskforce concerning complaints of sexual and other forms of abuse by Defence personnel, alleged to have occurred prior to 11 April 2011, which was the date of the announcement of the DLA Piper Review.
The Taskforce was established to assess and respond to individual cases of alleged abuse in Defence. This means that the fundamental work of the Taskforce is to determine, in close consultation with complainants, the most appropriate outcome in individual cases. The Taskforce is only able to provide outcomes in relation to allegations or complaints that fall within the scope of its Terms of Reference and which the Taskforce has assessed to be plausible.

The Taskforce Terms of Reference include a specific requirement to focus on allegations of abuse at HMAS Leeuwin and the ‘24 [ADFA] cases noted by DLA Piper’ – a cluster of sexual abuse allegations occurring at ADFA in the 1990s. In June 2014, the Taskforce released the Report on abuse at HMAS Leeuwin – a detailed report based on more than 200 personal accounts from former junior recruits who trained at HMAS Leeuwin, a junior recruit training establishment operated by the Royal Australian Navy in Fremantle, Western Australia from 1960 to 1984.

This report is tabled alongside the Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

The Terms of Reference also require that the Taskforce advise Defence on the implications of its work for Pathway to Change. The Taskforce has satisfied this term by:

- publishing detailed parliamentary reports, including this report, the Report on abuse at HMAS Leeuwin and the Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy;
- identifying alleged abusers still serving in Defence and, where appropriate, referring matters to the CDF for consideration of possible administrative or disciplinary action if the alleged abuser is identified by the Taskforce as still serving; and
- arranging for senior Defence representatives to participate in a private, facilitated meeting with a complainant under the Defence Abuse Restorative Engagement Program.

With the release of this report, the Taskforce has also satisfied the requirement under the Terms of Reference that it advise the Minister for Defence and Attorney-General as to whether a Royal Commission would be merited into any categories of allegations raised with DLA Piper or the Taskforce. The Taskforce’s recommendation is provided at section 13.3.

### 3.2 Leadership of the Taskforce

**[a] The Chair of the Taskforce**

The executive authority of the Taskforce is vested in, and exercised by, the Chair of the Taskforce. The Chair of the Taskforce is responsible to the Parliament through the Attorney-General and Minister for Defence.

The Hon Len Roberts-Smith RFD QC was appointed as Chair of the Taskforce by the then Attorney-General and Minister for Defence on 26 November 2012. Mr Roberts-Smith was initially appointed for a 12-month term, although he has since accepted two extensions. Mr Roberts-Smith’s term will conclude on 30 November 2014, shortly after this report is tabled in Parliament.

It is expected that the Attorney-General, Senator the Hon George Brandis QC and Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon David Johnston, will soon make an announcement about the leadership of the Taskforce beyond 30 November 2014.

As required under the Terms of Reference, the Chair of the Taskforce has included his recommendation as to whether and what form the Taskforce should operate beyond this date at section 4.2 of this report.
(b) The Taskforce Leadership Group

The members of the Taskforce Leadership Group were appointed by the Attorney-General and Minister for Defence to advise and assist the Chair of the Taskforce in the overall guidance, policy and direction of the operation of the Taskforce. The Leadership Group comprises:

- Deputy Chair Mr Robert Cornall AO;
- Member Consultant Ms Susan Halliday; and
- Ex-Officio Member Chief Police Officer, Australian Capital Territory Policing, Mr Rudi Lammers APM.

Since 26 November 2012, the Leadership Group has met on 23 occasions. The individual members of the Leadership Group have each worked to make significant personal contributions to the development of policies, practices and methodologies.

On 30 May 2013, the then Attorney-General and Minister for Defence announced the appointment of an independent Reparation Payments Assessor, Ms Robyn Kruk AM. The Reparation Payments Assessor is an independent position established to make administrative decisions associated with making a Reparation Payment under the Defence Abuse Reparation Scheme.

3.3 Assessment process and complainant support

More than half of the approximately 2400 complaints being considered by the Taskforce were new complaints not previously considered by DLA Piper.

The Taskforce assessment process (section 7) is necessarily rigorous. Throughout its period of operation, the Taskforce has sought to balance the need to expedite the assessment of allegations of abuse with the important requirement of giving these allegations the requisite consideration matters of this seriousness deserve.

The Taskforce’s first priority is to ensure that complainants receive sufficient support as they progress through the process to receive an outcome. The Taskforce established the Complainant Support Group to provide one-on-one support to complainants throughout the process of their engagement with the Taskforce. Staff members of this group have wide experience in working with people who have been subjected to violence, discrimination, social disadvantage and trauma. They provide advice, explanations and updates to complainants and are able to assist vulnerable complainants to receive counselling, including emergency counselling, as required.

Part B of this report contains direct quotes from complainants relating to the impact that coming forward to the Taskforce has had on their lives (section 8.5). The vast majority of the feedback received from complainants indicates that complainants have experienced personal benefit as a result of coming forward to the Taskforce, particularly through the outcomes provided.

3.4 Taskforce outcomes

The Taskforce has made considerable progress providing outcomes to complainants, as discussed in detail at section 9 of this report. As at 27 October 2014, the Taskforce had:

- fully implemented a range of innovative national programs to deliver outcomes to complainants, including the world-first Defence Abuse Restorative Engagement Program;
- assessed 2049 complaints and provided 1416 complainants with Case Coordinators to guide them through the process towards an outcome;
- referred 353 complainants for counselling sessions under the national Defence Abuse Counselling Program;
- made 1159 Reparation Payments ($46.705 million in total) to complainants under the Defence Abuse Reparation Scheme;
• held 76 Restorative Engagement Conferences between complainants and senior Defence representatives, arranged under the Defence Abuse Restorative Engagement Program;
• prepared 235 Defence representatives to participate in Restorative Engagement Conferences around Australia;
• referred 80 matters to State and Territory Police for consideration of criminal investigation and prosecution;
• identified still-serving alleged abusers and referred 40 cases (involving 64 alleged abusers) to CDF for consideration of administrative or disciplinary action;
• provided a detailed analysis of the ‘24 [ADFA] cases noted by DLA Piper’ to Defence, with recommendations for further action in relation to still-serving abusers;
• provided statistical information surrounding systemic and cultural issues to the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA), including responding to specific requests from DVA regarding classes of abuse at certain locations;
• prepared three detailed Parliamentary reports regarding the nature and extent of abuse in Defence as reported in complaints to the Taskforce; and
• engaged with Defence in relation to systemic issues identified under the DLA Piper Review.

As the discussion at Part B makes clear, the Defence Abuse Restorative Engagement Program continues as one of the major programs of the Taskforce in terms of both complexity and impact. Based on an innovative model developed by the Taskforce to respond to the particular needs of complainants, the program provides an opportunity for complainants to have their personal accounts of abuse heard, acknowledged and responded to by a senior Defence representative. The Taskforce anticipates that some 1000 complainants will have taken part in the Defence Abuse Restorative Engagement Program by the time it concludes on 30 June 2016.

It is important to note that many complainants have chosen not to pursue the option of referring their matter to police for a variety of reasons. This trend must be viewed in context; offences such as sexual assault are under-reported in the general community. The comparatively low number of matters being referred to police is not a reflection of the seriousness of the complaints received by the Taskforce.

Part B also provides further discussion of the issue of alleged abusers still serving in Defence. This is a matter that the Taskforce takes extremely seriously. It is important to make clear that the Taskforce is not able to take direct action against Defence members. When the Taskforce refers matters to Defence, it does so with the expectation that Defence will conduct further enquiries into the matter, including, where necessary and appropriate, the exercise of formal inquiry or investigative powers it has available.

### 3.5 Taskforce engagement with Defence and other agencies

The Taskforce engages with a number of stakeholders, ranging from advocates and representative associations, to members of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee. Information about the Taskforce’s engagement with other agencies is provided at section 11.

Due to the nature of its work, the Taskforce engages with Defence in a variety of ways, which are discussed in detail at section 10. The Taskforce has worked with Defence to put in place processes to facilitate the exchange of information and to effectively implement the Defence Abuse Restorative Engagement Program. At a leadership level, the Chair of the Taskforce directly raises systemic and other issues with Defence leadership, including the CDF.

Part B includes a specific discussion of the work undertaken by the Taskforce in relation to the ‘24 [ADFA] cases noted by DLA Piper’ (section10.3). This section should be read alongside the Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy.
3.6 Other observations

Part B concludes with some general observations regarding the DLA Piper Review (section 13.1) and the management of the information that the Taskforce has gathered over two years of operation (section 13.2).

The DLA Piper Review was the immediate precursor to the establishment of the Taskforce. Particularly influential was the detailed personal information and recommendations in relation to specific cases, which are contained in Volume 2 of that review. This information has been integral to the assessment process in relation to the complaints that were transferred to the Taskforce from DLA Piper. The Taskforce has also considered the recommendations and systemic issues identified by the DLA Piper Review throughout its period of operation. The Chair of the Taskforce has directly raised a number of systemic issues with the senior leadership of Defence.

It is important to note that the recommendations and observations about systemic issues contained in the DLA Piper Review were developed prior to the establishment of the Taskforce. The Taskforce has been guided by its Terms of Reference in determining whether it should take action in relation to these matters. In some instances, the Chair of the Taskforce has considered it appropriate to raise some specific systemic issues directly with the senior leadership of Defence.

The Taskforce hopes that by releasing the detailed information contained in Part C, it will contribute to fostering a deeper understanding of the nature and extent of abuse in Defence as well as of the factors giving rise to abuse in Defence.

---

1 The ADFA ‘Skype incident’ in 2011 involved the video transmission of an act of sexual intercourse between two first year cadets at ADFA in a room within the cadets’ accommodation, using the software application ‘Skype’, and the subsequent viewing of the sexual act by six cadets. The female first year cadet involved in the act was unaware of and did not consent to the videoing and transmission at the time.

4. Legacy issues and Royal Commission

Under its Terms of Reference, the Taskforce is required to advise whether a Royal Commission would be merited into any categories of allegations raised with DLA Piper or the Taskforce, in particular the ‘24 [ADFA] cases noted by DLA Piper’. It is also required to report to the Minister for Defence and Attorney-General on whether, and in what form, the Taskforce should continue beyond its initial period and the funding that would be required. Information relating to the Taskforce’s funding is provided at section 12 of this report.

4.1 Royal Commission

The question whether a Royal Commission should be established into abuse in Defence in general or specifically into allegations of abuse arising at ADFA has attracted substantial public discussion. Section 13.3 of this report contains recommendations in relation to the question of a general Royal Commission into abuse in Defence, as well as a Royal Commission specifically considering abuse at ADFA.

While a brief summary of the Taskforce’s views on this question is provided below, it should be read alongside the complete discussion provided at section 13.3 of this report, which includes contextual information about the nature and purpose of a Royal Commission.

Public discussion about this issue includes frequent references to what could be achieved through a Royal Commission. The Taskforce has considered each of these commonly articulated views and has concluded that a Royal Commission would be likely to send a strong message to those who experienced abuse that they are not alone and would also generate significant publicity, most likely leading to more individuals coming forward with complaints of abuse.

The Taskforce has also concluded that a Royal Commission might well elicit information that would cast a light on the cultural and systemic issues relating to the occurrence of abuse in Defence, as well as issues relating to Defence management of reports of abuse. However, given the various inquiries and reviews that have been conducted into Defence’s culture, a Royal Commission would be unlikely to add any significant new information or insight into these issues. Nonetheless, the Taskforce considers that a Royal Commission might be able to gather more detailed information about actual actions taken in response to abuse by particular individuals, including witnesses and those in positions of responsibility. A Royal Commission would also be able to ascertain from those in the chain of command or management, what they actually knew about abuse and what actions they took in response to reports of abuse.

One common argument in favour of a Royal Commission is that it would hold people to account. However, a Royal Commission’s role is not to make legally binding determinations of fact or law, but rather to consider systemic issues, and to report and make recommendations in relation to them. The Taskforce also notes that it would not necessarily be the case that allegations against those claimed to be abusers in Defence would be made public in the course of public hearings held by a Royal Commission or in any resulting administrative or disciplinary hearings within Defence.

A general Royal Commission into abuse in Defence, with no limitation as to time, place or person, would be an enormous, resource-intensive and extremely expensive exercise, likely to take some years.

Defence has been the subject of numerous inquiries and reviews about this – including the DLA Piper Review and the work of the Taskforce itself. This report itself provides a comprehensive review of the incidence of abuse in Defence across services establishments and locations, and identifies cultural and systemic factors which encouraged, allowed or facilitated it. This information supplements that already available and should inform cultural change in Defence. The Taskforce considers it unlikely that a general Royal Commission would add significantly new information about systemic or cultural issues relating to abuse in Defence or the response of Defence to it.
The Taskforce accepts that in recent years, Defence has undoubtedly been making genuine and significant efforts to achieve cultural change and deal with the problem of abuse, especially sexual and serious physical assault. The Taskforce considers that Defence should be given the opportunity to continue the measures it has been taking to effect cultural change in this area. The Taskforce also proposes that further recommendations in relation to whether a general Royal Commission should be established be made prior to the conclusion of the Taskforce.

The question of whether a Royal Commission should be established into ADFA specifically is also considered at section 13.3(f). This section should be read alongside the Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

As the Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy makes clear:

- there was a disturbingly high incidence of sexual abuse of female cadets at ADFA during the 1990s;
- in a number of these cases, Defence did not take appropriate disciplinary, administrative or management action;
- in some cases, reports of sexual abuse were seriously mismanaged by Defence; and
- the Taskforce is aware of at least 13 individuals allegedly responsible for perpetrating sexual abuse at ADFA in the 1990s still serving in the Permanent Forces or Active Reserves, and an additional three individuals who have transferred to the Inactive/Standby Reserves.

The Taskforce considers that there is a very real risk that the ranks of officers in the ADF include a number of individuals who sexually assaulted or otherwise seriously abused other members of the ADF and include officers who acquiesced to that conduct.

Defence has known the identity of some of the people who experienced sexual assault at ADFA and some of the alleged abusers for many years. However, there are very likely a significant number of cases of which Defence is not aware.

Although the Taskforce appreciates that there are real difficulties for Defence in responding to allegations of sexual abuse at ADFA, outlined both in section 13.3(f) and in the Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy, the fact remains that many of these allegations were not appropriately managed at the time they were made. Further, there are constraints on Defence’s capacity to respond to them now. This means that a significant cluster of very serious allegations within Defence have never been thoroughly investigated and abusers have never been called to account.

The Taskforce considers that the only way of ensuring confidence that the allegations of very serious abuse at ADFA can be thoroughly and completely investigated, and appropriately dealt with is by way of Royal Commission.

The Taskforce accordingly recommends that the Government establish a Royal Commission to inquire into, report and make recommendations in respect of allegations of abuse, and the management of reports of allegations of abuse, at ADFA from its inception to the present day.

4.2 Legacy issues

The final section of this report provides the Taskforce’s recommendation about whether, and in what form, the Taskforce should continue beyond 30 November 2014, when the term of the current Chair concludes. The Taskforce understands that the Minister for Defence and Attorney-General are currently considering this matter.

It is clear that the Taskforce’s operations and programs will continue beyond 30 November 2014 in order to provide outcomes to complainants. The current Taskforce forecasting is that these ongoing operations and programs, including counselling and Restorative Engagement Conferences, will conclude on 30 June 2016.

In the Taskforce’s view, it would be appropriate at this stage to move the Taskforce into a transitional phase of ongoing established operations and programs to conclude on 30 June 2016. The Taskforce proposes that the contractual terms of the Chair and Leadership Group conclude on 30 November 2014 and that responsibility for the Taskforce be transferred to an existing single independent statutory office holder until 30 June 2016.
The Taskforce proposes at section 14.1 that responsibility for the Taskforce be transferred to the Defence Force Ombudsman (DFO). The Taskforce considers that the ongoing operations of the Taskforce until 30 June 2016 would most comfortably and appropriately sit within the DFO’s responsibilities, with little disruption or dislocation to existing administrative and staffing arrangements. Further, this proposal would ensure that the Taskforce is able to maintain its independence from Defence.

It is the Taskforce’s strong view that people who suffered abuse in Defence must be able to come forward with their complaints and have those complaints appropriately responded to. Although the work of the Taskforce is not yet complete, this report concludes with some preliminary observations in relation to whether Taskforce programs or other measures should continue beyond 30 June 2016.

The experience of the Taskforce indicates that those who have experienced abuse may take many years to reach a point where they can talk about the abuse they suffered. The Taskforce considers that the Government and Defence should develop and implement processes to enable people who suffered abuse in Defence and did not make a complaint to the Taskforce before the 31 May 2013 cut-off date to have their complaints appropriately responded to.
PART B: TASKFORCE RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS OF ABUSE
5. Introduction to the work of the Taskforce

The Taskforce was established in 2012 with the unanimous support of the Government, the Opposition, the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) and the Secretary of Defence, marking both a political and institutional commitment to rid Defence of all forms of abuse.

When it was established, the Minister for Defence made clear that the Taskforce was not to be another inquiry. Rather, it was established to provide practical outcomes to those who came forward with a complaint of abuse in Defence. The Taskforce was not to make recommendations, but any relevant information relating to cultural or systemic change in Defence was to be brought to the attention of the Minister and the CDF, so as to inform Defence’s Pathway to Change strategy and measures implementing other reviews of Defence’s culture.

In total, the Taskforce received approximately 2400 complaints of abuse.

Part B of this report provides an overview of the way that the Taskforce deals with these complaints, commencing with a rigorous assessment process (section 7) and concluding with one or any combination of the outcomes that the Taskforce can provide (section 9). These sections in particular provide a useful context for the more detailed analysis of the content of complaints of abuse that is provided in Part C.

Part B also contains important information about the progress that the Taskforce has made in delivering outcomes under its innovative national programs, including updated statistics about the number of matters referred to civilian police (section 9.4) and to the CDF for consideration of administrative or disciplinary action (section 9.5).

In addition to delivering outcomes, a key focus of the Taskforce has been to work with Defence to instil a culture which, as far as possible, prevents, stops and appropriately responds to abuse when it occurs.

This aim informs all of the work undertaken by the Taskforce, but holds particular relevance to the innovative Defence Abuse Restorative Engagement Program. This program provides the opportunity for complainants to have their personal account of abuse heard, acknowledged and responded to by a senior Defence representative in a private, facilitated conference. The Taskforce is already seeing indications that this program will have a positive impact on cultural change in Defence. This impact is perhaps best demonstrated by the quotes from Defence participants provided at section 9.3.

Section 10 of this report provides a more complete picture of the way in which the Taskforce engages with Defence, both to progress complaints and to inform the Pathway to Change strategy. As discussed in Part A, the Taskforce believes that this report will make an important contribution to that strategy.

It is important to make clear that the work of the Taskforce will continue beyond 30 November 2014.

However, with almost all complaints fully assessed, all major policy decisions made and the conclusion of the Chair’s term, it is timely to provide some other conclusions and observations relevant to the ongoing work of the Taskforce. Section 13 provides an overview of the work that has been done by the Taskforce in relation to the recommendations and systemic issues identified in the DLA Piper Review.
6. Public communication about the Taskforce

The Taskforce was established at a time when there was a great deal of public awareness and understanding of the issue of abuse in Defence.

The work of the Taskforce has attracted considerable interest from journalists, lawyers, academics and the Australian public. Given the understandable public interest in its work, the Taskforce places a great deal of importance on transparency and providing accurate information about its processes to complainants and members of the public. However, the Taskforce also has an obligation to protect the personal information it has received from complainants and to ensure that public statements and reporting about its work do not cause additional distress to complainants.

Soon after its establishment in November 2012, the Taskforce made a policy decision not to actively approach people to ask whether they would be interested in making a complaint. This decision was based on advice from experts, including rape crisis counsellors and victim support groups.

However, due to public awareness of the work of the Taskforce and targeted communications activities described below, the Taskforce received numerous fresh allegations of abuse via email, telephone and letter. DLA Piper also transferred to the Taskforce all cases that they assessed in the course of their review, where the person making the complaint provided consent for the Taskforce to consider their matter.

Information about the work of the Taskforce has been made available to members of the public through the Taskforce website [http://www.defenceabusetaskforce.gov.au]; in quarterly reports tabled in Parliament by the Minister for Defence; and through information provided to journalists in media releases and in response to media enquiries. As discussed below, the Taskforce has also engaged with advocates and veterans groups who represent the interests of those who suffered abuse in Defence.

Recognising that the process of discussing abuse can itself be distressing, the Taskforce established the Complainant Support Group to provide direct, one-on-one assistance and information to complainants who progressed through the process to access an outcome (see section 8 for further information).

When the then Minister for Defence tabled the Taskforce’s First Interim Report to the Attorney-General and Minister for Defence on 14 March 2013, he also announced that people would have until 31 May 2013 to register a complaint of abuse with the Taskforce. The Taskforce took active steps to raise public awareness of the reporting deadline put in place by the Government, through:

- information provided on the Taskforce website;
- advertisements placed in major metropolitan newspapers on four separate occasions in April and May 2013; and
- a media release distributed to print, broadcast and online media outlets urging anyone who suffered abuse in Defence prior to 11 April 2011 to contact the Taskforce.

The Attorney-General and Minister for Defence also distributed two joint media releases on 16 and 28 May 2013, publicising the cut-off date.

The Taskforce worked with Defence to publicise this deadline internally. Defence has advised that ADF-wide communications about the reporting deadline were circulated, including via DEGRAM and CDF Signal, articles in the Air Force, Navy and Army newspapers, and online on the Defence intranet site and CadetNet.

In total, the Taskforce received approximately 2400 complaints of abuse in Defence by the reporting deadline.

Before it is able to act on complaints of abuse, the Taskforce must ensure that the complaint falls within its Terms of Reference and is ‘plausible’. Section 7 provides detailed information about the assessment process.
7. Taskforce assessment of complaints

Under its Terms of Reference, the Taskforce is required to assess the findings of the DLA Piper Review and the material gathered by that review, and any additional material available to the Taskforce concerning complaints of sexual and other forms of abuse by Defence personnel, alleged to have occurred prior to 11 April 2011.

As discussed above, the fundamental work of the Taskforce is to determine, in close consultation with complainants, the most appropriate outcome in individual cases. The Taskforce is assessing complaints of alleged abuse in Defence where:

- the complaint was made to the DLA Piper Review and consent was subsequently given to refer it to the Taskforce;
- new allegations and complaints were made to the Taskforce by the reporting deadline of 31 May 2013; and
- the allegations and complaints refer to abuse that is alleged to have occurred prior to 11 April 2011.

In establishing the Taskforce, the Government emphasised that it was not a Royal Commission nor any other kind of formal inquiry whose function would be to gather evidence and present a report making findings and recommendations. The evidentiary threshold put in place by the Government was that of ‘plausibility’. The reason that this low evidentiary threshold for acceptance of allegations of abuse was put in place was because many of those who experienced abuse never reported it at the time and have never told anyone since – often for decades. That meant there would usually be no contemporaneous documentation; there would usually be no witnesses; and there would certainly be no collection of forensic evidence. The consequences of abuse itself often include significant long-lasting mental or psychological damage, drug addiction, alcoholism, anger issues and other problems which would present great difficulty for the victim in having their evidence accepted in any court proceeding or administrative inquiry – particularly after the lapse of many years. The ongoing impacts of abuse are discussed in more detail at section 22.2 of Part C of this report.

In short, for very many people who have experienced abuse in Defence there was (and is) absolutely no prospect that they could obtain recourse through existing formal legal or administrative processes. Their cases were unresolvable.

The then Government’s decision to put in place the test of ‘plausibility’ as a gateway for a complainant to have their account of abuse heard, accepted as true, acknowledged as wrong and to be provided specific practical outcomes, was a ground-breaking means of resolving the unresolvable.

However, it is important to understand what the Taskforce cannot do. The Taskforce is an instrument of the Government established in the exercise of executive power under the Australian Constitution. It is not a creature of statute. It cannot conduct investigations or inquiries. It has no investigative powers; cannot hold hearings or take evidence; cannot make ‘findings’ or legally-binding determinations and cannot give directions to Defence or anyone else.

7.1 The scope of the Taskforce

The Taskforce is only able to act on allegations or complaints that fall within the scope of its Terms of Reference. To determine whether an allegation or complaint is within scope, the Taskforce must consider:

- the type of abuse alleged (the Taskforce is able to consider allegations of sexual abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment, and workplace harassment and bullying);
- whether the alleged abuse occurred while the complainant was an employee of Defence (this includes serving members of the Australian Defence Force or the Australian Defence Force Reserves, cadets, and employees of Defence including ongoing and non-ongoing employees of the Department, contractors and apprentices);
- whether the alleged abuser was an employee of Defence;
- whether there is a sufficient connection between the alleged abuse and employment (of both the complainant and the alleged abuser) in Defence;
• whether the alleged abuse occurred prior to 11 April 2011; and
• whether the alleged abuse or complaint was reported to the Taskforce prior to the reporting deadline of 31 May 2013.

These matters are considered by the Taskforce through the assessment process. As at 27 October 2014:
• 2049 complaints had been assessed;
• 230 complaints were in the process of being assessed; and
• 86 complaints had been withdrawn.

Of the complaints assessed by the Taskforce as of 27 October 2014:
• 1617 were found to raise one or more plausible allegations of abuse that fell within the scope of the Taskforce Terms of Reference;
• 189 were found to fall outside of the Taskforce Terms of Reference; and
• three were assessed as not being plausible.

The discussion below provides further information about the assessment process, including the definitions of abuse used by the Taskforce.

(a) Definitions of abuse

(i) Sexual abuse

In the context of the Taskforce, sexual abuse means unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, committed against a person without their consent. It does not require physical contact between the person and the alleged abuser and it can include conduct in the presence of the person.

Sexual abuse may include (but is not limited to) incidents where, without the consent of the person, an individual or group:
• has sexual intercourse with the person;
• penetrates the vulva, vagina or anus of the person with a finger, tongue or other object;
• indecently assaults the person;
• forces the person to perform or witness sexual acts or to be in a state of undress;
• touches the person’s genitals;
• inappropriately touches the person with sexual connotations;
• exposes genitals while making lewd or suggestive comments;
• attempts to perform sexual acts of the kind referred to above on the person;
• makes a deliberate threat to perform sexual acts of the kind referred to above;
• procures or distributes images, sound recordings or video footage of the person engaged in sexual acts or acts with a sexual connotation; or
• performs an act of indecency which involves the person.

The Taskforce interprets an act of indecency as an act that has a sexual connotation which is offensive to the ordinary modesty of an average person. It can include circumstances where there is no contact between the abuser and the person, such as watching a person shower or use a toilet without the person’s consent.

The Taskforce notes that many allegations of sexual abuse are likely to also include an element of sexual harassment.
(ii) Physical abuse

In the context of the Taskforce, physical abuse may include [but is not limited to] incidents where, without the consent of a person, an individual or group either directly or indirectly:

• punches, strikes, kicks, touches, or spits on the person;
• restrains or moves the person;
• deprives the person of their liberty;
• applies force to the person;
• forcefully interferes with the person’s clothing while it is on the person;
• orders a person to undertake an activity that is contrary to a medical restriction;
• drugs the person;
• threatens physical violence to the person;
• causes the person to apprehend that they will be subjected to physical violence;
• engages in harsh or excessive disciplinary practices that do not have a nexus to a training or educational exercise and which cause physical injury;
• unreasonably fails to provide or allow access to medical assistance; or
• engages in hazing/initiation of the person (for example, pressuring/forcing the person to consume things such as food that has gone off, faeces or excessive amounts of alcohol).

(iii) Sexual harassment

In the context of the Taskforce, sexual harassment is considered to be unwanted and non-consensual conduct of a sexual nature, which makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be obvious or indirect, physical or verbal, repeated or one off and perpetrated by males and females against people of the same or opposite sex.

Sexual harassment can involve:

• staring, leering;
• unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against a person, pinching, slapping, fondling, hugging, or other unwelcome touching;
• suggestive objects, comments or jokes;
• insults or taunts of a sexual nature;
• innuendo or sexually explicit pictures, SMS, voice or written messages, emails, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Skype, online chat, letters, faxes;
• requests for sex or repeated unwanted invitations to go out on dates;
• intrusive questions or statements about a person’s private life or body;
• intimate or physical contact;
• indecent exposure or public masturbation; and
• stalking or obscene communications (by phone, letters, email, Facebook or SMS).

(iv) Workplace harassment and bullying

In the context of the Taskforce, workplace harassment includes offensive, belittling or threatening behaviour towards an individual or a group. The behaviour is unwelcome, unsolicited, usually unreciprocated, and often repeated. Bullying is a form of harassment and involves repeated behaviour that a reasonable person would consider to be humiliating, intimidating, threatening or demeaning. Bullying can also include abusive group behaviour or ‘ganging up’ against one or more individuals.
Bullying and harassment can take many forms, including, for example:

- physical behaviour, such as intimidating or aggressive body language;
- verbal or written abuse;
- harsh or excessive disciplinary practices that do not have a nexus to a training or educational exercise;
- behaviour or language that threatens, frightens, humiliates or degrades – shouting and screaming, tone of voice, sarcasm and insults, whether face-to-face, in emails, or in graffiti;
- initiation practices or pranks;
- interfering with a person’s personal property or work equipment;
- inappropriate and unfair application of work policies and rules – involving, for example, performance management or access to leave; and
- subtle patterns of behaviour such as:
  - ostracism – isolating or excluding a person or group;
  - undermining – persistent and baseless criticism, unwarranted removal of responsibility, ridicule, taunts, spreading rumours or making inappropriate remarks; and
  - sabotage – giving meaningless tasks, confusing and/or contradictory instructions, inappropriately and frequently changing targets and work deadlines, deliberately withholding important information, insisting on petty work requirements.

(b) Employee of Defence

For the purposes of the Taskforce, a person is an employee of Defence if they were, at the time of the alleged abuse:

- an employee of the Department of Defence, including but not limited to:
  - full and part-time, ongoing and non-ongoing employees of the Department; and
  - a contractor to the Department;
- apprentices in the Department;
- a serving member of the Australian Defence Force including a member of Australian Defence Force Reserves;
- a cadet (who are presently known as an Australian Navy Cadet, an Australian Army Cadet or an Australian Air Force Cadet but however described at the time); or
- the person is imputed to be a Defence employee (e.g. they were abused as a child of a Defence member when living on a Defence base).

(c) Sufficient connection between abuse and employment in Defence

For a complaint to fall within the scope of the Taskforce Terms of Reference there must be a sufficient connection between the abuse that occurred and employment in Defence. Relevant factors in assessing whether there was such a connection include the circumstances leading up to the abuse, the abuse itself, and any previous relationship between the alleged abuser and the complainant. Considerations include whether the complainant would otherwise have come into contact with the alleged abuser had the complainant not been employed in Defence and whether there is any information available to suggest that the alleged abuser was aware that the complainant was employed in Defence.

Factors which may be indicative of a sufficient connection include where the abuse occurred on Defence grounds (including Department of Defence buildings); on a Defence vessel; during deployment; during a Defence training exercise; during a work related or sanctioned event including social activities; or in a Defence environment or relationship or with a direct connection to that environment or relationship.
Factors which may indicate there is not a sufficient connection include where:

- the abuse occurred off Defence premises during a non-sanctioned social activity and the complainant does not appear to have been under any cultural or other obligation to attend;

- the abuse occurred off Defence premises in circumstances where the alleged abuser is not aware that the person is employed in Defence;

- the complainant had not previously met the alleged abuser in a Defence work or social context; and/or

- the person and the alleged abuser have a personal relationship that extends beyond their work in Defence and the alleged abuse occurs within the context of that relationship.

(d) Defence management of reports of abuse

The Taskforce assessment process includes an assessment of Defence’s management of reports of abuse. The Taskforce’s findings in relation to this issue are discussed in detail at section 21.

The Defence Abuse Reparation Scheme Guidelines (Guidelines) acknowledge that ‘mismanagement by Defence in relation to abuse is unacceptable’; and a specific Reparation Payment of $5000 is available if a complaint of abuse contains a plausible account of Defence mismanagement (see further section 9.2 below regarding the Defence Abuse Reparation Scheme).

According to the Guidelines, mismanagement may be found when there has been ‘mismanagement by Defence [that] occurs after a verbal or written report or complaint of abuse has been initiated and where the report or complaint was made prior to 11 April 2011’; or there is ‘any other circumstance where the Reparation Payments Assessor is satisfied mismanagement by Defence has occurred in respect of alleged abuse which occurred before 11 April 2011’.

Importantly, the Guidelines also stipulate that ‘a reference to mismanagement by Defence’ includes ‘circumstances where the Reparation Payments Assessor is satisfied Defence failed to take reasonable management action to prevent, stop or respond to abuse’.

As such, it is not critical that an actual report of abuse was made to Defence in order for Defence mismanagement to be found. In some circumstances, mismanagement might be found even when there was no actual report of abuse, but there was mismanagement by conduct, or the creation or encouragement of circumstances which prevented or discouraged a subject of abuse from reporting it. For example, mismanagement might be found where:

- there was a pattern or practice of abuse such that Defence plausibly knew or ought to have known about the abuse and failed to stop or prevent it;

- the abuse was effected by a person of seniority or higher rank to the complainant to whom the complainant could have otherwise reported the abuse;

- the abuse was witnessed by a person in Defence in a position of seniority or higher rank but who took no steps to stop or prevent it; and/or

- the complainant presented to a superior or other person in authority with signs of injury as ought reasonably to have given rise to concern that the complainant was being, or may have been, abused, and they failed to make any reasonable enquiry.

In such cases, the Taskforce has identified ‘constructive reports’ of abuse. That is, where there was no actual report of abuse to Defence, but where the circumstances of the abuse contributed to a complainant not making a report about the abuse and/or Defence knew or ought to have known about the abuse. An assessment of Defence mismanagement may be made on this basis.
7.2 The ‘plausibility’ threshold

Once these threshold questions are answered, the Taskforce must assess whether the allegation of abuse is plausible — that is, whether it has the appearance of reasonableness. Satisfaction of the plausibility test means that the Taskforce accepts — to that standard — that the alleged abuse occurred and that the complainant is eligible to be considered for the outcomes the Taskforce is able to provide.

As discussed above, the plausibility test used by the Taskforce was determined by the Government, when establishing the Taskforce, to be the appropriate threshold for acceptance of claims of abuse in Defence. The intention was to enable the Taskforce and Defence to accept and act upon allegations of abuse which may not have been able to be acted on under existing formal processes. The Taskforce process was not intended to be an adversarial one involving adjudication between a complainant and an alleged abuser.

The plausibility test is a standard of proof that is lower than the balance of probabilities (the civil or administrative standard) or beyond a reasonable doubt (the criminal standard). However, in making an assessment as to whether an allegation of abuse is plausible, the Taskforce does not merely accept the unsubstantiated allegation. Complaints are required to be verified by statutory declaration (and the potential penalty for purposely making a false statutory declaration is imprisonment). Further, all relevant material is considered by the Taskforce — this includes medical reports or other documentation provided by the complainant, along with service, medical or disciplinary records provided by Defence.

For further details about the Taskforce process of assessing plausibility, see Appendix B.

7.3 Reconsideration of decisions

The Taskforce has made decisions in relation to every complaint received, including decisions relating to:

- whether a complaint is within the scope of the Terms of Reference;
- whether the complaint is plausible; and
- the range and extent of the outcomes provided to complainants whose complaints with the Taskforce are within scope and plausible.

The Taskforce has recognised that some complainants will wish to query decisions made in respect of their complaint. As such, the Taskforce established an internal reconsideration process in respect of most (but not all) decisions, to allow a complainant an opportunity to provide the Taskforce with new or additional information which could lead to a reconsideration of a decision.

In circumstances where a complainant would have a legitimate expectation of a particular process or outcome, the letter or advice to the complainant setting out the decision will:

- clearly set out the reasons for the Taskforce’s decision; and
- advise the complainant of the internal, informal reconsideration process.

A complainant seeking reconsideration has been required to:

- make the request for reconsideration in writing;
- make the request within 28 days from the date the complainant received the original decision;
- identify the basis of the request for consideration and the complainant’s preferred outcome; and
- verify additional information by Statutory Declaration where appropriate or requested by the Taskforce.

The Taskforce acknowledges all requests for reconsideration in writing within seven days of receipt.
The Chair of the Taskforce or his delegate considers all requests for reconsideration and determines the outcome. Results of the reconsideration process might include:

- upholding the original decision and explaining why;
- making a new decision in place of the original decision and explaining why; and
- varying the original decision and explaining why.

Complainants are advised in writing of the decision and the reasons for it promptly after a reconsideration is finalised.

As at 27 October 2014, the Taskforce had received 77 requests for reconsideration. As at that date, 50 had been responded to and the complainant advised of the final outcome of their complaint.

---

1 Consent in this context means consent given freely and voluntarily by a person with the cognitive capacity to give the consent.


3 Above, [4.6.1].

4 Above, [1.4.3(b)]. The Reparation Payments Assessor is an independent position established to make administrative decisions associated with the making of a Reparation Payment under the Scheme. The Assessor is responsible for deciding whether or not a person satisfies the criteria to qualify for a Reparation Payment and, if so, the amount of the Reparation Payment in each case.

5 Above, [1.4.4].
8. Taskforce engagement with complainants

8.1 Complainant support

I’d also just like [to] take this opportunity to say that I really appreciate the way you have treated me during this process, and the sensitivity you have shown. While this process hasn’t always been easy … your compassion and demeanour throughout this whole process has helped it to be as smooth as possible for me. I have nothing but praise for you and I can’t thank you enough.

– Complainant, 2013/0880

Complainants who choose to pursue an outcome through the Taskforce have made the active decision to participate in the process. The outcome provided in each case will depend on all relevant circumstances, including the personal circumstances and preferences of the complainant themselves.

The Taskforce recognises the importance for complainants of having one point of contact wherever possible and therefore established the Complainant Support Group as the only group within the Taskforce to have direct contact with complainants. The Complainant Support Group provides support to complainants as they proceed through the Taskforce assessment and processes.

The Taskforce acknowledges that for some complainants reporting their experience of abuse to the Taskforce may have been a difficult decision. Recounting their experience of abuse can in itself be traumatic for complainants. Some complainants also required assistance in completing the paperwork required for the Taskforce. Complainant Liaison Officers within the Complainant Support Group provided one-on-one support as complainants recounted their experience and assisted them to complete and submit their paperwork.

Once a complainant’s account of abuse is found to be in scope and plausible, a Case Coordinator is allocated to provide support and assistance to complainants accessing outcomes. Case Coordinators also support and assist complainants to prepare for their participation in a Restorative Engagement Conference (see section 9.3 below regarding the Defence Abuse Restorative Engagement Program).

Many complainants have expressed appreciation for the support they have received from the Taskforce, especially the time and care that staff members of the Complainant Support Group have taken in supporting them. Many say they feel they have been heard and believed, often for the first time.

Much of the contact with complainants occurs by phone using separate phone rooms that have been set up for staff to speak with complainants. This ensures that Complainant Support Group staff members are able to fully focus on conversations with complainants, and ensures that privacy is maintained.

A number of people who did not meet the deadline to register with the Taskforce have subsequently made contact. Whilst these people have not been able to register, their details have been kept by the Taskforce in order for the Chair to advise the Minister for Defence of the numbers of callers to the Taskforce who have been unable to be registered. Complainant Support Group staff members provide details of other avenues available to them to progress their complaint.

Members of the Complainant Support Group have reported that they have been privileged to have had the opportunity of providing assistance to complainants through their work in the Taskforce.

As noted in Part A, the Taskforce would like to thank all complaints who have shared their personal account of abuse with the Taskforce.
8.2 Unreasonable complainant conduct

The Taskforce deals with a large number of complainants, most of whom act responsibly in communicating with the Taskforce about the processing of their complaint of abuse. As noted above, the Taskforce acknowledges that the process of talking about abuse can itself be distressing. In the course of dealing with the Taskforce, some complainants become upset and angry because of the time it can take to process their complaint. The Taskforce makes every effort to provide support to complainants who are distressed.

However, there have been situations where a complainant has become angry, aggressive and abusive to Taskforce staff members. These complainants have threatened harm, or insisted on outcomes that are clearly not possible or appropriate. They have been unwilling to accept decisions and continue to demand further action on their complaint where that is not possible, or have otherwise behaved unreasonably.

The Taskforce deals with unreasonable complainant conduct in accordance with the Commonwealth Ombudsman’s *Better Practice Guide to Managing Unreasonable Complainant Conduct.* This ensures equity and consistency in the handling of all complainants and that the Taskforce’s limited resources can be used effectively to complete its Terms of Reference.

The key elements of the Taskforce’s approach to handling unreasonable complainant conduct include:

- managing complainants’ expectations from the beginning;
- showing respect for all complainants, those acting reasonably and those not;
- setting clear limits in response to unreasonable demands;
- setting limits when rudeness, anger and aggression transgress our personal boundaries;
- acknowledging complainants’ feelings and actions; and
- apologising if there has been a mistake, omission or delay and indicating how the situation will be rectified.

8.3 Representative organisations

As has already been noted, the vast majority of the Taskforce’s interactions with complainants occur directly through the Complainant Support Group. The Taskforce sought to design its processes to ensure that it was possible to progress through the process without the assistance of a legal or other representative.

However, throughout the course of its operation, the Taskforce has benefited from the feedback and support it has received from legal representatives and advocates representing people who suffered abuse.

The Taskforce notes in particular the contribution made by legal representatives, particularly those from Shine Lawyers and Slater and Gordon, who share the Taskforce’s commitment to achieving outcomes for people who suffered abuse in Defence.

Taskforce staff members also have met directly with representatives of associations, including the William Kibby VC Veterans Shed and the Defence Abuse Support Association. Although these associations are not affiliated financially or otherwise with the Taskforce, the Chair has publicly noted the contribution that they have made in assisting people who experienced abuse.

The Taskforce looks forward to maintaining its productive relationship with legal practitioners and advocates as it progresses with its work beyond 30 November 2014.

Unfortunately, the Taskforce has become aware of one association, purporting to act in the interests of victims of abuse, which has caused distress to complainants. The false or misleading information released by that association creates confusion about the Taskforce’s processes and wrongly discourages potential complainants from seeking the assistance from the Taskforce to which they are entitled. The Taskforce concluded that it would be detrimental to complainants,
staff of the Taskforce and the Taskforce’s work to engage to engage with this association, and took the principled stance of advising the association of this decision and ceasing contact. Ceasing contact with an association that claims to represent the interests of complainants to the Taskforce was not a decision that the Taskforce took lightly. However, it was a decision that was consistent with the fundamental principle that underpins all of the Taskforce’s work: to do no further harm.

Of course, a complainant’s membership of that or any other association does not impact upon the outcomes available to them.

8.4 Administrative Access Scheme

The Taskforce developed the Administrative Access Scheme to simplify the process for complainants to request documents held by the Taskforce outside of the formal process set out in the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act).

As at 27 October 2014, the Taskforce had received 203 requests for access to information under the Administrative Access Scheme. This included requests for information from the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) in accordance with the Taskforce’s Memorandum of Understanding with DVA for the exchange of information.

As at 27 October 2014, the Attorney-General’s Department (AGD) had received 10 requests for access to information under the FOI Act. The FOI requests have all been from complainants for access to information held by the Taskforce. As the Taskforce is an executive body which is administratively housed in AGD, documents held by the Taskforce are stored in the Department’s record keeping systems and are therefore in the possession of the Department for the purposes of the FOI Act. Therefore the AGD is the ‘agency’ under the FOI Act.

The Taskforce has taken a very liberal approach to releasing information; balancing the desire to disclose as much information as possible to complainants against its obligations under the Privacy Act 1982 (Privacy Act) to maintain other individuals’ right to personal privacy. The Taskforce has accepted a degree of risk by choosing to disclose as much information as possible to complainants.

The Taskforce only redacts personal information that it is obliged to under the Privacy Act. The majority of information the Taskforce releases under the Administrative Access Scheme is provided directly to complainants, which means the Taskforce generally only redacts personal information about other people that is not already known to the complainant.

Responding to requests under the Administrative Access Scheme and FOI Act has presented a significant increase in work for the Taskforce Legal and Coordination Group, and the Taskforce as a whole.

8.5 Impact on complainants of coming forward to the Taskforce

Coming into contact with the Taskforce has affected the lives of complainants in various ways.

Many complainants to the Taskforce had never spoken of their abuse before, even to their partners or family members. One consequence of this can often be a manifestation of the inter-generational impacts of abuse, where the complainant abuses members of his or her family in various ways. The reasons for this behaviour are not understood (and have therefore never been addressed) because the complainant has never told them of the abuse they suffered.

For those who had shared their stories previously, recounting them to the Taskforce was still a difficult or distressing experience for many. The Taskforce acknowledges the distress that some complainants have experienced as a result of sharing their story of abuse.

However, the Taskforce is gratified to hear that many complainants have experienced personal benefit as a result of coming forward to the Taskforce. The Taskforce Complainant Support Group ensures that all feedback received from complainants is recorded so that it can be used to strengthen and inform the Taskforce’s processes.
The vast majority of the feedback received from complainants relates to the positive impact that the Taskforce has had on their lives. A small number of complainants have also expressed a view about whether a Royal Commission should be established, although this issue is not usually an issue at the forefront of complainant’s minds. While a small number of complainants have advised the Taskforce of their view that a Royal Commission into abuse in Defence is necessary, the comments generally focus on the need for cultural change in Defence more broadly.

While the views and interests of complainants have of course informed the recommendation provided at section 13.3, the Taskforce notes that determining whether a Royal Commission into any categories of abuse is merited is a complex question that cannot be answered without a detailed consideration of the nature, purpose and powers of a Royal Commission.

The Taskforce has included in the body of this report some of the feedback provided by complainants. A further selection of feedback from complainants is provided at Appendix C.

The Taskforce thanks all complainants for their courage in coming forward to talk about the abuse they suffered and is grateful to all those who have taken time to provide feedback.

I’ve now done a series of sessions with a counsellor and I’m grateful to the [Taskforce] for providing this service. The counsellor was perfect for my needs as she has experience with the ADF and could empathise with my personal story.

As a result I would like to consider looking at the Restorative Engagement Program, if it is not too late to do so. Prior to these counselling sessions I considered myself too fragile to attempt such a process, but now I see it as an opportunity to present my case for the betterment of current and future service personnel.

While I am aware that the ADF now has procedures in place to stop (or at least minimise) bullying and bastardisation, I know from media reports and conversations I’ve had that it still happens. If my small efforts can have any positive effect, then I want to try to improve this situation.

– Complainant, 2013/1261

Thanks to you and the [Taskforce] programme our lives have taken a turn for the better. I would like to congratulate you and the rest of the team for the efficient manner with which you have carried it out. With such a big programme as this it would be easy to lose sight of the human element. You certainly kept a caring approach to the job and I feel uplifted by the interest you have taken in any worry I have expressed. In particular, your encouragement kept me going when the submission opened some old painful wounds.

Add the very welcome reparation to all the written and verbal comfort, I feel that closure on the events of 1954 has been satisfactorily achieved.

– Complainant, 2013/1140

If the Taskforce is satisfied that an allegation is within the scope of its Terms of Reference and meets the plausibility test, the Taskforce consults with the complainant about appropriate outcomes. These outcomes might include:

- a referral for free counselling under the Defence Abuse Counselling Program;
- a Reparation Payment of up to $50 000 under the Defence Abuse Reparation Scheme, with the amount of payment determined by the independent Reparation Payments Assessor;
- participation in the Defence Abuse Restorative Engagement Program, which gives complainants the opportunity to have their personal story of abuse heard, acknowledged and responded to by a senior Defence representative – including, in some cases, an apology;
- referral of appropriate matters to civilian police for their assessment and possible investigation and prosecution; and/or
- referral to the CDF for administrative and/or disciplinary sanction or management action.

Complainants may receive one or any combination of these outcomes, depending on their circumstances.

9.1 Defence Abuse Counselling Program

I am very happy with the counselling here in [place], very professional and flexible, giving me time to evaluate and reconnect at my leisure. Rewarding in as much that I was able to talk and confide with another person without the fear of intimidation, although I must say very daunting at first I found I was able to open up and feel comfortable talking about it more so because it was a female rather than another male (I don’t know why?). As you know I had not spoken to anyone about this before.

– Complainant, 2013/1286
As discussed on the phone, the Psychologist I saw was [Name], through Davidson Trahaire Corpsych. It was a most positive experience and has been incredibly beneficial. I would not have sought psychological counselling myself and am most appreciative that it was offered as part of the program. I also feel that [Name]’s skill as a psychologist has greatly aided my healing.

– Complainant, 2013/1910

The national Defence Abuse Counselling Program (Counselling Program) is available to complainants to address the impacts of the abuse suffered or the associated distress of retelling their experiences to the Taskforce. A complainant can elect counselling as one of the Taskforce outcomes available once their matter has been assessed as in scope and plausible and a Case Coordinator had been allocated. In some situations, a complainant may be referred to counselling prior to the finalisation of their assessment. Significant others affected by the complainant’s experience of abuse may also choose to access counselling under the Counselling Program.

The Counselling Program provides for a series of supportive counselling sessions for individual complainants to enable them to discuss issues and help build strengths. Where a complainant needs or seeks counselling under the Counselling Program as a result of the abuse they suffered in Defence, or the consequences of it, their Case Coordinator will make a recommendation to the Chair of the Taskforce. The policy is to approve initially 10 counselling sessions, with the counsellor to report back after the first five. Ordinarily, a maximum of 20 counselling sessions may be approved, although approval may be given for more than 20 sessions in exceptional circumstances.

The Taskforce’s National Counselling Provider is Davidson Trahaire Corpsych. The Davidson Trahaire Corpsych counsellors supporting the Counselling Program are registered psychologists or mental health accredited social workers, with significant experience working in mental health and trauma. In certain circumstances, where a complainant is already seeing a registered psychologist or accredited mental health social worker, the Taskforce may be able to fund some sessions with this counsellor.

As at 27 October 2014, the Chair had approved 2977 counselling sessions for 353 complainants under the Counselling Program, of which 1386 counselling sessions had already taken place.

In addition to the counselling services available as an outcome to complainants, the Taskforce also provides details of other counselling services that might be available to complainants who are feeling distressed and are in need of urgent assistance. The details of such services are also available on the Taskforce website.

9.2 Defence Abuse Reparation Scheme

To all [Taskforce] staff ... I want to say you have all been fantastic, caring understanding and one of the most professional groups of people I have ever had the pleasure of being associated with. It is a very difficult task that you are performing and ok a couple of things could be improved perhaps but overall I know with all my heart you are doing the very best you can and no one can reasonably ask for more than that.

... Because of the [Reparation Payment], I now know that my story is believed as it should be. And having that plausibility recognised means absolutely everything to me. It is also the exact amount of money for what it is designed to do. There is no amount of money that can compensate for the abuse I and many have suffered and I know you are not trying to compensate for that. You are simply saying sorry and adding an enormous weight to that sorry with a gift. You have no need to change anything at all, and just know that you have my 100% support and appreciation for everything that you are doing. I cannot reiterate enough how much you have improved my life, just keep up the good work, as I know you will.

– Complainant, 2013/0678

The Defence Abuse Reparation Scheme (Scheme) was established as a means of providing financial reparation of up to $50,000 to individuals who suffered abuse in Defence. The Scheme is governed by the Guidelines, which were signed by the Government on 10 April 2013.
Payments made under the Scheme are not intended as compensation for physical, psychological, emotional or financial loss or damage suffered as a result of the abuse. A Reparation Payment is intended to be an acknowledgement that the abuse was wrong and should not have occurred.

Under the Guidelines, there are five categories of Reparation Payment. These categories are:

- Category 1 (Abuse): $5000;
- Category 2 (Abuse): $15 000;
- Category 3 (Abuse): $30 000;
- Category 4 (Abuse): $45 000; and
- Category 5 (Mismanagement by Defence): $5000.

The first four categories allow for recognition of increasingly serious abuse, relative to other allegations of abuse before the Taskforce. A complainant will qualify for a Category 5 (Mismanagement by Defence) payment where they made a verbal or written report or complaint of abuse to Defence, which was either mismanaged or not managed by Defence. As noted in section 7.1, the Taskforce can also find Defence mismanagement in some circumstances where there is no actual report of abuse.

On 30 May 2013, the Government announced the appointment of Ms Robyn Kruk AM as independent Reparation Payments Assessor (Assessor). The Assessor is responsible for determining whether or not a Reparation Payment should be made to each complainant who applies for a payment. The Assessor will also determine which category of payment to make in each case.

As at 27 October 2014, the Assessor had made 1274 decisions. Of these:

- 54 were preliminary decisions where the Assessor was awaiting or considering further information.
- 1220 were final decisions.

1159 of the 1220 final decisions (totalling $48.888 million in payments) have been paid ($46.705 million). A breakdown of the 1220 final decision follows:

- 654 maximum payments of $50 000 [comprising a Category 4 (Abuse) and a Category 5 (Mismanagement by Defence) payment]
  - 628 of these 654 final decisions had been paid.
- 13 payments of $45 000 [Category 4 (Abuse) payment with no Category 5 (Mismanagement by Defence) payment]
  - 13 of these 13 final decisions had been paid.
- 326 payments of $35 000 [comprising a Category 3 (Abuse) plus a Category 5 (Mismanagement by Defence) payment]
  - 312 of these 326 final decisions had been paid.
- 3 payments of $30 000 [comprising a Category 3 (Abuse) payment with no Category 5 (Mismanagement by Defence) payment]
  - 3 of these 3 final decisions had been paid.
- 185 payments of $20 000 [comprising a Category 2 (Abuse) and Category 5 (Mismanagement by Defence) payment]
  - 167 of these 185 final decisions had been paid.
- 4 payments of $15 000 [comprising a Category 2 (Abuse) payment with no Category 5 (Mismanagement by Defence) payment]
  - 4 of these 4 final decisions had been paid.
• 32 payments of $10,000 (comprising a Category 1 [Abuse] and Category 5 [Mismanagement by Defence] payment)
  - 30 of these 32 final decisions had been paid.
• 3 payments of $5,000 (comprising Category 1 [Abuse] payment with no Category 5 [Mismanagement by Defence] payment)
  - 2 of these 3 final decisions had been paid.

9.3 Defence Abuse Restorative Engagement Program

The Restorative Engagement Program has proven extremely valuable for both victims of abuse and Defence.

For victims of abuse, the opportunity to tell their personal story of abuse to a senior Defence member is a powerful and often cathartic experience.

For Defence members, like me, who have participated in Restorative Engagement, you cannot help but be moved by the pain and damage caused to these men and women during their military career.

Their treatment was, and remains unacceptable.

The accounts that have been relayed to Defence by the Taskforce show that abuse is not confined to time frames, locations or Services. This demonstrates that the ADF must continue to proactively educate all members that abusive behaviour is not conducive, or necessary, in a modern Defence Force. I have the commitment of the senior leadership that such behaviour will not be tolerated and I will continue to make this one of my highest priorities.

– Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin AC, Chief of the Defence Force

[The conference was] a great success – I felt that I was sincerely listened to and the Army valued my comments and the conference exceeded my expectations and I would strongly recommend this process to anyone else.

– Complainant, 2013/1840

The Defence Abuse Restorative Engagement Program (Restorative Engagement Program) is a unique and carefully tailored approach to dealing with personal harm suffered in an institutional context. It is based on an innovative model developed by the Taskforce to respond to the particular needs of complainants and to provide them with an opportunity to have their story of abuse heard, acknowledged and responded to by Defence.

(a) Development of the Program

The DLA Piper Review found that ‘a significant number of the persons who contacted the Review indicated that their primary wish is for Defence to acknowledge that abuse had occurred and to express regret for that action’.2 The processes considered by DLA Piper included truth and reconciliation, restorative justice and private facilitated resolution.

On 26 November 2012, the establishment of the Taskforce was announced by the then Minister for Defence, the Hon Stephen Smith MP. He proposed that one of the outcomes which would be available to those who experienced abuse within Defence would be ‘restorative justice’.3

The Taskforce concluded that the concept of ‘restorative justice’, as it was commonly practiced within the criminal justice system, was not suitable in this context primarily because the Taskforce does not engage with alleged abusers and is not part of the criminal justice system. Additionally, the program developed by the Taskforce had to provide an opportunity to address one of the primary motivations for many complainants telling their personal story, namely to ensure that what had happened to them would not happen to anyone else. An overwhelming focus of complainants in bringing their story of abuse to the Taskforce was on how Defence (or their service) as an organisation had allowed or enabled the abuse to occur and had not supported the complainant when they had subsequently reported the abuse, rather than on seeing the abuser brought to account.
Many complainants expressed a desire to have their personal account of abuse listened to by Defence and accepted as true, and to receive acknowledgement that the abuse was wrong and should not have happened. Furthermore, complainants expressed the desire to know that the Defence culture that enabled their abuse was changing.

The Taskforce concluded that facilitated conferences between Taskforce complainants and senior Defence representatives would meet the two chief purposes of the Restorative Engagement Program: for complainants, to give appropriate acknowledgement and potential resolution; and in relation to Defence, to enable a broader level of insight into the impact of abuse on its members to drive cultural change within Defence.

The Taskforce’s **Restorative Engagement Program Framework** outlines the background, rationale, principles and processes that informed the development of the Program. Feedback from the participants in the Program to date has informed refinements to the Framework.

The Restorative Engagement Program is founded on the best practice principles and values of restorative practice, conciliation and mediation. These include *do no further harm*, confidentiality, safety and privacy. The Restorative Engagement Program also applies trauma informed care principles, and recognises the importance of complainants being consulted about their preferences for a conference and offered as much choice as possible about how and where the conference will take place, within the parameters of the Program.

By its nature the Restorative Engagement Program is not a forum for negotiating a Reparation Payment. When developing the program, the Taskforce kept the delivery of the Reparation Scheme separate from the Restorative Engagement process. This ensured that the conference process could be a genuine personal interaction unburdened by discussions about financial reparation. Under the Reparation Scheme, there is no ‘trade off’ of rights for payment; complainants are not required to give up any legal rights to take action in the future. Nor is the complainant subject to any confidentiality agreement which would prevent them talking about the abuse they suffered.

The process is not adversarial – all participants go into a conference accepting (applying the standard of ‘plausibility’) that the complainant’s account of abuse is true. The Restorative Engagement Program, therefore, is very different to mediation or conciliation – there is no dispute to mediate and no differences to conciliate. The conference itself is the outcome: the facilitated *engagement* between the complainant and the Defence representative *restores* the relationship between the complainant and Defence.

**[b] Delivery of conferences**

Meeting with people that we have harmed in the past was an incredibly confronting and difficult thing to do. It is clear that some of our personnel are carrying a great burden around with them as a result of their service. Talking to complainants on a personal level and listening to their stories, has only affirmed for me the importance of what we are doing. Everyone in Air Force is responsible for creating a safe workplace - but now I feel, more than ever, that I am responsible for leading this change for the future.

– Air Marshal Geoff Brown AO, Chief of Air Force

The Restorative Engagement Program is available to complainants who have made plausible allegations of abuse to the Taskforce, and who are considered by the Taskforce to be suitable and ready to participate. The Taskforce anticipates that up to 1000 complainants may wish to participate in the Restorative Engagement Program. Complainants who have participated to date have suffered a range of abuse including bullying and harassment, sexual harassment, physical abuse, and sexual abuse.

The Restorative Engagement Program provides complainants with the opportunity to meet with a senior Defence representative in a conference to engage in a genuine and meaningful interaction about the complainant’s experience of abuse and its impacts. The conference is a primary means of directly addressing the harm to the complainant resulting from the abuse, and the ongoing consequences of this, in a forum where the harm is not disputed, and Defence is able to acknowledge and validate the complainant’s experience.
Conferences have been held around Australia, in capital cities and in regional centres. The Taskforce endeavours to arrange conferences as close as possible to the complainant’s residence and support network.

Senior Defence representatives participating in the Program range in rank from the CDF (4 star) down to Colonel (Equivalent) across Army, Navy, Air Force and the Public Service component of Defence.

Defence representatives are not able to take part in the Program until they have attended a one-day Preparation Session conducted by the Taskforce. This session covers the theory and principles of the Restorative Engagement Program, logistical and administrative arrangements and skills and techniques necessary to take part in a conference safely and in accordance with the objectives of the Program. There are presently more than 200 Defence representatives in the pool of those who have attended these sessions. The Taskforce envisages an eventual requirement for up to 400. Details about the Taskforce’s engagement with Defence on the Restorative Engagement Program are provided at section 10.2.

Thirty-nine Facilitators have been engaged and specially trained by the Taskforce around Australia to conduct conferences. As part of the accreditation process, Facilitators participated in a comprehensive two-day induction program in June and August 2014. Facilitators are subject to ongoing assessment of their ability to facilitate conferences and are required to maintain their Taskforce accreditation to do so.

As part of the conference process, the Facilitator carefully prepares the complainant, their support person (should they wish to have one), and the senior Defence representative, before bringing them together in a private meeting (the conference itself) to discuss the complainant’s personal story of abuse, which may include details of the abuse itself and/or the impact of the abuse on the complainant’s life. The experience of sharing their story, and hearing the response from the Defence representative, has been a transformative experience for complainants.

The Facilitator provided gentle but firm management of the process, allowing the conversation to roll when appropriate and reining in when appropriate. She greatly assisted the achievement of the outcomes of the conference.

- Defence representative, Captain (RAN)
  
  I feel the conference went very well, it was professionally and sensitively conducted. I feel validated, uplifted and encouraged.

- Complainant, 2013/329

The conference also provides an opportunity for the complainant, should they wish, to hear directly from Defence about progress in relation to cultural change within Defence.

As part of the conference, the Defence representative may offer an expression of regret or an apology, personally as well as on behalf of Defence.

Significantly, where letters of apology are proffered, they are written personally by the Defence representative or by their Service Chief. As with the conferences themselves, such letters accept the abuse occurred, acknowledge that it was wrong and include a response to the particular circumstances. They are not crafted by lawyers and in practice have embodied extremely sensitive, empathetic and genuine personal responses from the Defence representatives.

You cannot help but be affected by participation in these conferences. The stories of abuse are profound. The failure to act and to support our people is shameful. But it provides an imperative and resolve to change things for good; we must not squander this opportunity.

- Vice Admiral Tim Barrett AO CSC, Chief of Navy

Conferences are usually conducted face-to-face. In appropriate circumstances, such as illness or where the complainant lives in a remote location, a conference may be conducted through indirect means using electronic communication, video-conferencing or other modes of communication.
As at 27 October 2014, the Taskforce had conducted 76 conference processes. Of these, 71 involved face-to-face facilitated conferences between the complainant, their support person and a senior Defence representative. The Taskforce has also conducted five indirect conference processes, where the complainant received a personal letter from a Defence representative expressing acknowledgement, regret and/or apology.

As at 27 October 2014, there have been no conferences relating to abuse in the Australian Public Service (APS) arm of Defence, although some APS complainants have expressed an interest in participating in the Restorative Engagement Program. This is because the Taskforce has received fewer complaints of abuse from Defence APS employees.

The Taskforce anticipates a further 60 conferences will be held before the end of this year and between 50 and 60 conferences will be conducted each month from early 2015. As noted above, the expectation is that some 1000 complainants will have taken part in the Program by the time it concludes on 30 June 2016.

(c) Ongoing Defence commitment

One of the most memorable experiences for me was meeting with people who had experienced abuse at the hands of their fellow soldiers and had been let down by their leaders and their comrades.

The meeting highlighted the need for real cultural change in Army and made me even more determined and committed to achieving results.

The work being undertaken by the Taskforce is an essential step towards achieving restoration for victims and long lasting cultural change in Army and throughout Defence.

– Lieutenant General David Morrison AO, Chief of Army

The commitment from Defence has been a critical element in the development, evolution and success of the Restorative Engagement Program.

Defence representative participation in the Restorative Engagement Program is governed by two documents. The Restorative Engagement Program Protocol (Protocol) articulates at a high level, the interaction between the Taskforce and Defence. This document was signed by the CDF, Secretary of Defence and the Chair of the Taskforce. The Australian Defence Force Joint Directive 30/2013 – Defence Participation in the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce Restorative Engagement Program signed by the CDF and the Secretary (Joint Directive) demonstrates Defence’s strong commitment to giving complainants the opportunity to have their accounts of abuse heard, acknowledged and responded to.

The Joint Directive has been in effect since 8 October 2013 and enables Defence representatives to take part in the Restorative Engagement Program and respond freely to complainants’ personal stories of abuse without the legally-binding, mandatory reporting requirements that normally apply in other contexts in Defence – especially around alleged sexual offences and unacceptable behaviour.

This significant change in Defence policy enables complainants to be able to tell their story of abuse, and the impacts of this abuse, in a confidential and safe environment. Participant consent forms provide for disclosure of what happens in the conference, only in limited and appropriate circumstances. This does not prevent the complainant speaking anywhere else, about the abuse they suffered or the consequences of it.

In Phase 1 of the Restorative Engagement Program, conducted in October to December 2013, the most senior Defence leaders personally participated in conference processes. This included the then CDF, General David Hurley, AC, DSC; the then Vice CDF (Air Marshal Mark Binskin AC); the Chief of Army (Lieutenant General David Morrison AO), the then Chief of Navy (Vice Admiral Ray Griggs AO, CSC) and the Chief of Air Force (Air Marshal Geoff Brown AO), personally participated in conference processes.
Between them, these highest-ranking Defence officers took part in 14 conferences, which was pivotal to instilling support and commitment for the Restorative Engagement Program throughout Defence.

Since taking over as CDF this year, Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin AC has continued the strong support and commitment for the Restorative Engagement Program.

Defence representatives are nominated to participate by their Service Chief on the understanding that many of those taking part in conferences will rise to senior ranks within their Service. Defence representatives are selected from across the three Services, and the APS, at various high rank levels.

The Taskforce believes the Restorative Engagement Program enables a broader level of insight by Defence representatives into the impact of abuse on complainants, as well as building a collective understanding that will make a significant contribution to cultural change in Defence.

My first conference was difficult and distressing. I never knew such vile perpetrators could hide in our Army and prey on young soldiers. The Restorative Engagement Conference process is necessary for the individual and for senior officers. Senior officers need to understand there is a problem and they are the key to cultural change through strong leadership.

– Defence representative, Brigadier (Army)

Feedback from Facilitators and complainants regarding Defence representatives’ participation in the Program continues to be extremely positive. The genuine, sensitive and respectful manner in which Defence representatives participate in the Restorative Engagement Program is a key factor in complainants reporting that their participation in the Program has been a positive experience.

I was very saddened by the plight of the complainant with whom I worked, and how the abuse that he suffered during his time in the Army has affected his life; but I was buoyed and left feeling optimistic that my genuine concern and apology help lift a huge burden from his shoulders.

The complainant with whom I worked not only felt that the Army had let him down during the period in which he was abused, but he grieves over the betrayal of trust by those he considered his close friends; and he carries an enormous sense of loss for a career cut short in the only job that he had wanted from a young age.

– Defence representative, Colonel (Army)

Indications are that the Restorative Engagement Program is having a positive impact on cultural change in Defence. The majority of Defence representatives have reported that they strongly agree that:

• the conference provided an opportunity for them to build an understanding of workplace abuse and its implications on individuals and the organisation; and

• participating in the conference will assist them to better understand and respond to individuals reporting abuse in the future.

The overwhelming majority of complainants have reported a very positive experience through their participation in the Restorative Engagement Program. The positive and transformative nature of the conference process has also benefited the other participants, including the support person, Defence representative and the Facilitator.

For many complainants their participation in the Restorative Engagement Program has been a significant and cathartic experience which they report is the beginning of their journey towards healing and overcoming the impact of the abuse.
9.4 Referral to Commonwealth, State and Territory police agencies

The Taskforce Crime Group continues to assess complaints that allege a criminal offence has been committed, where the complainant has consented to referral to a police agency.

As noted in previous parliamentary reports, many complainants are choosing not to pursue this option for a variety of reasons. The number of matters referred to police is not a reflection of the seriousness of the complaints received by the Taskforce. It is important to note that even the most recent allegations of criminal conduct were nearly 18 months old when the Taskforce was announced.

In considering whether to recommend that the Chair refer a matter to police, the Crime Group (which consists mainly of serving or former police officers) assesses all the material available to determine whether or not what occurred could constitute a criminal offence at that time and in the relevant jurisdiction. That often involves a consideration of the law applicable then and may necessitate obtaining legal advice. If the circumstances could have constituted a criminal offence and if the complainant consents, the case will be referred to police.

It is neither the role nor the function of the Crime Group to conduct an investigation, nor to evaluate evidence. Those are matters for the appropriate police agency.

As at 27 October 2014, the Taskforce Crime Group had assessed 121 complaints involving 199 individual allegations of criminal misconduct. Of these, the Taskforce had referred 80 matters to State and Territory police:

- 28 have been referred to New South Wales Police Force;
- 18 have been referred to Victoria Police;
- 14 have been referred to Queensland Police Service;
- eight have been referred to Australian Capital Territory Policing;
- four have been referred to Western Australia Police;
- four have been referred to Northern Territory Police;
- three have been referred to South Australia Police; and
- one has been referred to Tasmania Police.

As at 27 October 2014 the Crime Group was assessing a further 47 matters.

The National Protocol on the Dissemination of Information to Commonwealth, State and Territory Police from the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce (National Protocol) has been agreed to by all Australian policing agencies. The Protocol requires the police to provide monthly updates to the Taskforce regarding the status of any investigation initiated from a Taskforce referral.

The Taskforce will continue to receive these reports updating the status of an investigation for as long as the Taskforce remains in operation.

 Whilst complainants have the option of accessing the Taskforce Crime Group to assess their matter, it is important to remember that a complainant can independently approach the police at any time to lodge a complaint about their allegations of criminal conduct.

However, the Taskforce understands that approaching the police to report or initiate a criminal investigation and possible prosecution can be daunting, and people may choose not to go down this path. Even where complainants request their matter to be referred to the Crime Group, they are able to withdraw their consent if they decide they no longer want the Taskforce to continue looking into the matter, just as if they initiated the report to the police agency directly.

Of the 80 complainants whose matters had been referred to police as at 27 October 2014, 15 subsequently withdrew their consent when contacted by police.
9.5 Referral to Defence for disciplinary, administrative or other action

One of the outcomes provided by the Taskforce is referral of a matter to Defence for administrative or disciplinary action. Matters may be referred to the CDF for consideration of possible administrative or disciplinary action where an alleged abuser is still serving.

The Australian military justice system covers both disciplinary and administrative actions. An ADF member can be subjected to both disciplinary and administrative action for the one incident.

Administrative action is generally taken when the conduct or performance of a member of the ADF is below the standard required. If the Taskforce identifies conduct that is below the expected standards and that conduct has either been mismanaged or not addressed, it may refer these cases to the CDF to consider whether administrative action is appropriate.

Disciplinary action may be appropriate where the allegation suggests an offence has been committed against the Defence Force Discipline Act 1982 (DFDA).

The complainant’s views on referral will be considered by the Taskforce when determining whether a matter should be referred to the CDF. However, under the Taskforce Terms of Reference, the Chair considers he has an obligation to inform the CDF where a currently serving alleged abuser potentially poses a risk to other serving Defence personnel. This may mean that a complaint may be referred to the CDF in the absence of the complainant’s support but with due regard to the complainant’s confidentiality and psychological safety.

The Taskforce also provides this information to the CDF to assist in painting an accurate picture of conduct across the broader Australian Defence Organisation. It is the Taskforce’s expectation that this information is used to support Defence’s efforts in moving forward as an organisation and will form part of Defence’s Pathway to Change initiatives.

It is important to remember that a referral for administrative or disciplinary action does not necessarily mean Defence can take any action. Allegations being dealt with under formal administrative processes or by DFDA prosecution must be proved to the civil burden of the ‘balance of probabilities’ or the criminal standard of ‘beyond reasonable doubt’ respectively. These are different standards of proof than that of plausibility, which is used by the Taskforce.

However, when the Taskforce refers matters to Defence, it does so with the expectation that Defence will conduct further inquiries into the matter. As the Taskforce does not have investigative powers, or the ability to take direct action in relation to Defence personnel, it has always been the case that Defence would have to look into any matter referred by the Taskforce, in line with their internal procedures and utilising the formal investigative or inquiry powers available to them, where necessary.

Defence have a number of options open to them when pursuing or resolving matters referred to the CDF for consideration. Some of these include:

- referral to Australian Defence Force Investigative Service (ADFIS) for assessment and possible investigation under the DFDA;
- referral for formal administrative investigation, inquiry and report (including referral to the Inspector General, Australian Defence Force);
- referral for possible assessment and administrative action, outcomes of which may include:
  - counselling;
  - formal warnings;
  - censures; and
  - removal from command, and discharge from service; and
- referral to civilian police authorities in appropriate cases.
Once a referral is made from the Taskforce to Defence, depending on the nature of the complaint, any action that is taken remains a matter for Defence.

As at 27 October 2014, the Taskforce had referred 40 cases to the CDF for his consideration of possible administrative or disciplinary action (including 17 cases referred to the CDF in the ‘ADFA 24’ Case Summary Analyses provided on 16 October 2013 and 8 September 2014). These 40 cases include 64 alleged abusers identified as still serving in Defence at the time of the assessment. The breakdown for where these individuals were serving at the time of assessment was:

- Permanent Forces (including Department of Defence): 38;
- Active Reserves: 11; and
- Standby/Inactive Reserves: 15.

A further 27 matters involving 29 alleged abusers have been assessed as requiring no further action.

---

1 The delay between a final payment decision and actual payment is due to the time difference between the complainant being informed of the final outcome, the complainant’s EFT form being received by the Taskforce, and the payment being processed.


10. Taskforce engagement with Defence

Shortly after the Taskforce’s commencement in November 2012, the Chair of the Taskforce met with Ms Carmel McGregor, the Deputy Secretary, Defence People and other Defence representatives, and developed an agreed Defence Abuse Response Taskforce / Defence Liaison Protocol (Defence Liaison Protocol). The Defence Liaison Protocol outlined the expectations of each organisation in achieving the Taskforce’s objectives.

Defence had previously established the Organisational Response Unit (ORU) as Defence’s central point of contact for all Taskforce related matters.

On 14 March 2013, the Secretary of the Department of Defence, Mr Dennis Richardson AO, and the then CDF, General David Hurley AC DSC, wrote to all Service Chiefs and Group Heads. Their letter provided information on the work of the Taskforce, the Defence Liaison Protocol and the role of the ORU and emphasised the importance of Defence continuing to cooperate fully with the Taskforce. The letter was reinforced by a Defence-wide DEFGRAM on the same date which outlined Defence’s support to the Taskforce and the Taskforce’s responsibilities.

The Taskforce’s Defence Liaison Unit (DLU) was established as the ORU’s counterpart, and has been the Taskforce’s primary conduit for information exchange with Defence ever since. The DLU engages with Defence on all matters concerning the Taskforce, including Requests for Information (RFIs), the Restorative Engagement Program, administrative or disciplinary action referrals, and aspects of the Administrative Access Scheme.

The DLU liaises with the ORU on a range of matters on a daily basis, and engages with the leadership of the ORU regularly to discuss and evaluate Defence’s support of this work.

The Chair of the Taskforce has been in regular contact with the senior leadership of Defence, throughout the life of the Taskforce. The Chair had a final meeting with General David Hurley, AC, DSC on 12 June 2014. The Chair also had various other meetings and telephone conferences with other senior Defence personnel, including with the Secretary of Defence, Mr Dennis Richardson, the new CDF, Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin AC, the now Vice CDF, Vice Admiral Ray Griggs, AO, CSC, Chief of Army, Lieutenant General David Morrison AO, the new Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Tim Barrett AO, CSC, and the Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force (IG-ADF), Mr Geoff Earley.

The Chair of the Taskforce met with Lieutenant General (Retired) Mark Evans, who is responsible for the Implementation of Changes to ADF Practice and Policy Concerning Redress of Grievance, Investigation and Inquiry Practice. This body of work derived from the Re-thinking Systems of Inquiry, Investigation and Review in Defence (Re-thinking Systems Review). The Re-thinking Systems Review was commissioned by the Secretary of Defence and the then CDF on 8 November 2011.

The objective of the Re-thinking Systems Implementation Project is to implement recommendations regarding the establishment of a system that is fair, timely, simple to implement, provides whole of Defence outcomes and takes into account legislative requirements.

The outcomes of the Review and the Implementation Project, as well as other initiatives being pursued through Defence’s Pathway to Change strategy, are relevant to the Taskforce Terms of Reference and will provide context in the Taskforce’s consideration of systemic issues arising from its work. More particularly, the Re-thinking Systems Review examined each of the recommendations in the DLA Piper Review Report and the response (or recommended response) by Defence to those recommendations. Section 13 provides further information about the Taskforce’s actions in relation the recommendations and systemic issues identified by the DLA Piper Review.

Lieutenant General Evans was directed by the then CDF General Hurley to complete this body of work as a refined version of the Re-Thinking Systems Review. The purpose of the Chair’s meeting with Lieutenant General Evans was to discuss Defence’s progress with the Re-thinking Systems Review and the Implementation Project.
The Chair has also met with the newly appointed Deputy Secretary, Defence People, Ms Rebecca Skinner.

These interactions have focused on the outcomes being produced by the Taskforce, how these may continue into the future, and how the lessons both Defence and the Taskforce have learned in administering these outcomes, may be harnessed to effect meaningful cultural change within the broader Australian Defence Organisation.

This engagement is discussed in the context of Defence’s Pathway to Change strategy at section 10.4.

10.1 Engagement on Requests for Information

In order for it to meet key organisational goals under the Terms of Reference, the Taskforce has required access to a vast array of Defence material. To achieve this, the ORU and the DLU have facilitated requests for access to Defence information, documents and personnel through a Request for Information (RFI) process.

While the ORU is the primary point of contact for RFIs, when required, the Taskforce has requested information from other areas of Defence such as the Director Inquiries and Investigations, the IG-ADF, and ADFIS.

As at 27 October 2014, the Taskforce has placed a total of 2292 formal RFIs with the ORU. Those RFIs have included 14,448 questions. Of the total number of RFIs, ORU have provided complete response to 2191, leaving 101 outstanding. The average number of days for ORU to process these RFIs is 32 days.

As the Taskforce has progressed through the assessment of matters and provision of outcomes to complainants, the volume of RFIs submitted to the ORU has increased. The content of these later RFIs has increased in complexity. The DLU and the ORU have worked closely to streamline the RFI process, to ensure an effective transfer of relevant information, for the achievement of the Taskforce’s objectives.

The Taskforce has generally enjoyed a productive relationship with the ORU in relation to the RFI process.

10.2 Engagement on Restorative Engagement

I found the conference to be an immensely deep personal growth experience. The complainant spoke for well over two hours, during which time I mainly listened. When he had told his story, I found it very empowering and satisfying to be able to apologise on behalf of my service for the wrongs committed against him many years ago. He thanked me earnestly for committing my time to listen to his story and expressed to the facilitator afterwards that he felt that a great weight had been lifted off his shoulders.

– Defence representative, Group Captain

The DLU works closely with the ORU in administering the significant logistical and administrative activities which support the involvement of Defence representatives in the Restorative Engagement Program.

The Taskforce works with the ORU to ensure that the Taskforce has a sufficient number of Defence representatives from the broader Australian Defence Organisation available and prepared to be involved in the Restorative Engagement Program. With the assistance of the DLU, Defence’s ORU held a total of 17 Defence Preparatory Sessions throughout the life of the current Taskforce, and in order to accommodate the amount of conferences the Taskforce anticipates for the future. The Taskforce anticipates that there will be additional Preparatory Sessions held in early 2015.

The DLU and ORU also coordinate the selection of nominated Defence representatives to participate in individual Restorative Engagement Conferences, and the exchange of information between the Taskforce and Defence, which facilitates their involvement.

With the number of Restorative Engagement Conferences increasing to another 60 or so before the end of the year and then exponentially to between 50 and 60 per month from early 2015 until the end of June 2016, managing the workload of ORU in liaising with and coordinating Defence representatives for participation in the Program will be critical.
It will be essential for ORU to be adequately resourced to achieve that.

A very worthwhile experience. The simple act of sitting down and talking with a complainant can bring a sense of satisfaction and closure. The value of this to both complainant and Defence shouldn’t be underestimated.

– Defence representative, Colonel

Australian Defence Force members participating in the Restorative Engagement Program must be of a 0–6 rank or above. For Army this is the rank of Colonel or above, for Navy it is Captain or above, and for Air Force it is Group Captain or above. In addition, the three most senior non-commissioned Officer ranks have attended Preparation Sessions to enable them to participate in Restorative Engagement Conferences: the Regimental Sergeant Major of the Army, the Warrant Officer of the Air Force and the Warrant Officer of the Navy.

To date, the Taskforce has received positive feedback from both Facilitators and complainants regarding Defence representatives’ participation in individual Restorative Engagement Conferences.

The enthusiasm, respect, and sensitivity of participating Defence representatives has contributed to a positive, restorative outcome for complainants, and demonstrates Defence’s commitment not only to the Program, but also to effecting cultural change more broadly across the organisation.

This participation has opened up channels for learnings about the long-term and profound consequences of abuse, to be communicated more broadly within Defence.

Participating in a Restorative Engagement Conference was both a challenging and educational experience. The damage done by unacceptable behaviour is real and long term. Listening to a former serving member’s pain and the impact that unacceptable behaviour has had on them and their family was both difficult and challenging. The feeling of not being believed and therefore not offered assistance and support caused immeasurable damage. In Navy we have worked together through NGN to create a better workplace. We all have a responsibility to continue to work together to eradicate this behaviour. Don’t be a bystander to unacceptable behaviour.

– Defence representative, Captain (RAN)

As at 27 October 2014, a total of 116 senior Defence representatives had taken part in individual Restorative Engagement Conferences. This number includes 103 males and 13 females, with a Defence service breakdown of:

- 45 Army representatives (42 males and three female);
- 48 Navy representatives (43 males and five females); and
- 23 Air Force representatives (18 males and five females).

There are currently 235 Defence representatives across Australia who had been prepared to participate in Restorative Engagement Conferences. This number includes 205 males and 30 females, with a Defence service breakdown of:

- 125 Army representatives (113 males and 12 females);
- 63 Navy representatives (54 males and nine females);
- 46 Air Force representatives (37 males and nine females); and
- one female APS Department of Defence representative.

10.3 Engagement on sexual abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy in the 1990s

In the Seventh Interim Report to the Attorney-General and Minister for Defence, the Taskforce provided a detailed overview of the actions taken in relation to the ‘24 Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) cases noted by DLA Piper’ – a cluster allegations of sexual abuse at ADFA in the 1990s. These cases were first identified during the Review into policies and practices to deal with sexual harassment and sexual offences (Grey Review).
It is important to note at the outset that the Taskforce has never had the investigative power or authority to take direct action against Defence members. These matters have been referred back to Defence to take action where possible and appropriate. This includes Defence assessment and further investigation of these matters on the basis of all the information to which it has access, or which it may obtain by utilising formal investigative or inquiry powers available to it, and not limited primarily to analysis of Defence and other documents.

On 16 October 2013, the Taskforce Chair provided the former CDF with an analysis of the 19 cases which the Taskforce believes were the subject of the Grey Review. This analysis identified at least 12 still serving members of Defence suspected of committing sexual or other offences at ADFA in the 1990s and made recommendations for Defence to consider taking further action in 13 cases. The Chair requested that CDF keep him informed about any action that Defence may take in any of these cases.

The Taskforce Chair subsequently wrote to the CDF on 8 September 2014 to provide an analysis of 14 additional cases of sexual abuse of women at ADFA in the 1990s that the Taskforce identified in a further review of Defence documents, and made recommendations for Defence to consider taking further action in an additional four cases.

On 25 September 2014, the CDF Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin AC wrote to the Taskforce Chair providing information about Defence consideration of these cases. The CDF indicated that Defence had reviewed the matters referred in the letter of 16 October 2013, but that there were limitations on what action Defence could take, as a result of issues such as the five year statutory limitation in the DFDA, and the need to obtain the consent of the complainants. The CDF also indicated that eight matters were still under consideration, including three that were likely to be referred to the relevant Service Chief, and one in relation to which options were still being considered. The CDF stated that no further action will be taken in 11 of the 19 matters (due to a lack of a clear allegation, an inability to identify an alleged perpetrator or the lack of consent of the subject of abuse to be contacted by Defencel.

The Taskforce notes Defence’s advice that its review of each of the 19 matters included consideration of the initial material referred by the Taskforce, and a wider records search across Defence. This included a holistic review of any relevant files (such as performance reports, personnel files, corporate files, and inquiry and ADFIS records). Defence advised that in a number of instances, this material exceeded that provided to the Taskforce by ADFIS or under the RFI process, and that, with complainant consent, they had been able to access further information including civilian police and court records, which enabled Defence to be more fully informed when assessing possible action.

These issues are considered further in section 13.3(f) below which considers the question of whether a Royal Commission regarding ADFA is merited.

In addition, further information about actions taken by the Taskforce in relation to these cases is provided at section 5 of the Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy that is tabled alongside this report.

In addition to considering the incidence of sexual abuse of women at ADFA in the 1990s, the Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy:

- provides background information regarding the work of the Taskforce and about ADFA;
- outlines the complaints that have been assessed as raising plausible allegations of abuse at ADFA;
- examines the Defence response to reports of abuse at ADFA;
- outlines the impacts of abuse on complainants;
- summarises the outcomes provided to complainants by the Taskforce to date;
- identifies some of the significant factors contributing to abuse at ADFA; and
- draws some overarching conclusions about the nature and extent of abuse at ADFA.
10.4 Engagement on Pathway to Change

Under its Terms of Reference, the Taskforce is required to liaise with Defence on any implications of its work for Defence’s Pathway to Change strategy.

On 7 March 2012, the Minister for Defence, Secretary of Defence and the CDF jointly announced a strategy for cultural change and reinforcement in Defence: Pathway to Change. Pathway to Change seeks to address the findings of a number of independent reviews into different aspects of Defence culture.

The Taskforce is meeting its obligation under the Terms of Reference by:

- consulting with the senior leadership of Defence;
- publishing detailed parliamentary reports;
- identifying alleged abusers who are still serving in Defence and, where appropriate, providing their names to the CDF for consideration of administrative or disciplinary action; and
- arranging for senior Defence representatives to participate in conference arranged under the Restorative Engagement Program.

With the tabling of this report, the Taskforce will have released three parliamentary reports providing detailed information about the nature of the complaints received across the three services and in relation to complaints alleging abuse at HMAS Leeuwin and ADFA.

After the release of the Report on abuse at HMAS Leeuwin in June 2014, the then Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Ray Griggs committed to ensuring that it will be used as a resource on all of the Navy’s promotion and leadership courses in the future. That commitment has been affirmed by the new Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Tim Barrett. The Taskforce hopes that both this report and the Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy also contribute to Defence’s understanding of the impact of abuse – and the mismanagement of complaints of abuse – on complainants and their families.

The activities discussed in this section are also relevant to the Taskforce’s work to engage with Defence in relation to the systemic issues identified in the DLA Piper Review. This work is discussed in more detail at section 13.
11. Taskforce engagement with other agencies

In meeting its objectives, the Taskforce has engaged with a number of agencies both within and separate to Defence, but which impact on and are influenced by the cultural change the Taskforce seeks to effect through its important work. These agencies include the Australian Defence Force Investigative Service, the Department of Veterans’ Affairs and policing agencies, each of which are discussed in this section.

11.1 Australian Defence Force Investigative Service

The Taskforce has engaged directly with the Australian Defence Force Investigative Service (ADFIS) where this has been necessary for information sharing purposes. ADFIS has been responsive to the needs of the Taskforce in this regard, and has provided the Taskforce access to the physical material ADFIS maintains, as well as access to their specialised skill and knowledge.

On occasion, the DLU has also had interactions with ADFIS around supporting the work of the Taskforce’s Crime and Administrative Sanction Groups, in referring complaints for investigation.

The Taskforce has engaged with ADFIS in relation to RFIs and with regard to a variety of ad hoc matters. To assist the work of the Taskforce, ADFIS has retrieved, categorised and collated thousands of documents and additional material. In return, the Taskforce undertook the labour-intensive process of scanning this information, and subsequently provided ADFIS with the resulting electronic files, which assisted the organisation with its ongoing work.

As a result of the DLA Piper Review, ADFIS and Defence initiated the project Plan Millennium, which entailed ADFIS scanning, collating and cataloguing material relevant to the work of the Taskforce. Where the Taskforce has submitted RFIs directly to ADFIS, the Taskforce has received timely responses.

11.2 Department of Veterans’ Affairs

The Taskforce has a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA), and continues to work closely with them under that agreement.

As at 27 October 2014 the Taskforce had received 19 requests for information from DVA. The Taskforce had also made one request for information from DVA.

The Taskforce is continuing to liaise with DVA to provide statistical information surrounding systemic and cultural issues that may assist DVA in assessing claims for pensions or other entitlements. Previously, this has included statistical information regarding the amount and type of abuse at certain locations. More recently, the Taskforce has responded to more specific DVA requests regarding classes of abuse at certain locations. This information is provided so that the Taskforce does not disclose any personal information or breach the Taskforce’s obligations under the Privacy Act.

It is hoped that providing this information will assist DVA in substantiating claims of abuse, particularly where there is limited other evidence available, which in turn will minimise distress to claimants. The Taskforce will continue to work with the DVA to consider ways of providing this information so that it remains a valuable source of information for assessing DVA claims into the future.

The Taskforce Terms of Reference require the Taskforce to advise on systemic issues within Defence and contribute to the current process of reform of Defence culture and practices. The Taskforce’s Case Management System allows it to capture and report on data that will help identify such systemic issues. While a clear picture of systemic issues will not be formed until the Taskforce has completed its work, once complete, the Taskforce will be able to report comprehensively on the data it has collected and provide relevant statistical information to DVA.
11.3 Police Services

The National Protocol remains the governing instrument regarding contact and information sharing between police agencies and the Taskforce.

The Taskforce is in the process of extending this Protocol to June 2015.

The Taskforce has established positive and beneficial relationships with all police services and will remain available to assist them for as long as the Taskforce remains in operation.

11.4 Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee

On 27 March 2014, the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee (Senate Committee) announced that it would be inquiring into the accessibility and adequacy of the current mechanisms to provide support to victims of sexual and other abuse in Defence, for inquiry and report by 28 August 2014. The Senate Committee’s report was released on 31 October 2014, shortly before this report was finalised.

The Taskforce made every effort to assist the Senate Committee in its inquiries. The Taskforce Chair and Executive Director have appeared before the Senate Committee in its current Inquiry on two occasions. The first Senate Committee hearing was held on 13 August 2014. The Senate Committee requested that the Chair appear for an additional hearing on 26 September 2014. All submissions and transcripts are available on the Senate Committee’s page on the Parliament of Australia website at <http://www.aph.gov.au>. The Chair’s Opening Remarks are available on the Taskforce website.

The Taskforce will closely consider the contents of this report. While it would be premature at this stage to provide a detailed discussion of its contents, a number of matters raised in the Senate Committee’s report were matters already being considered by the Taskforce and included in this report.

One preliminary observation is that the Senate Committee has made a number of recommendations that relate to matters requiring a decision from the Minister for Defence and Attorney-General, or concerning the operations of other agencies, such as Defence and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. Given the timeframe involved with finalising this report, it has not been possible to provide a complete response here.

However, the Taskforce does note that the Senate Committee has recommended that no further parts of Volume 2 of the DLA Piper Review should be released in summary or redacted form. It is important to make clear that Volume 2 of the DLA Piper Review contains detailed, highly sensitive, personal information and specific recommendations dealing with individual complaints of abuse. As noted above, the information contained in Volume 2 was the primary material (supplemented by any additional information provided by complainants or obtained by the Taskforce) used by the Taskforce in assessing all complaints transferred from DLA Piper. In order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of those individuals, the Taskforce provided this information to the Senate Committee under strict conditions in a secure room at Parliament House.

The Taskforce’s recommendation regarding whether a Royal Commission into any categories of abuse in Defence is merited is provided at section 13.3.
12. Taskforce Funding

The Taskforce is administratively housed in the Attorney-General’s Department. All costs related to the work of the Taskforce (including Reparation Payments and any unanticipated expenses) are being met by the Department of Defence. The total currently agreed budget over the life of the Taskforce (2012–13 to 2015–16) is $157.3 million.

This funding is comprised of two measures:

1. **Costs associated with the administration of the Taskforce** ($35.0 million).
   This includes funding for the Taskforce Leadership Group, Executive and administrative staff, and other corporate costs including; information technology, the Case Management System and accommodation.

2. **Costs associated with the delivery of Taskforce Outcomes** ($122.3 million).
   This includes funding for Complainant Support, Reparation Payments to complainants, caseworkers, counselling, Restorative Engagement, and crime and administrative action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>2012–13 (m)</th>
<th>2013–14 (m)</th>
<th>2014–15 (m)</th>
<th>2015–16 (m)</th>
<th>Total (m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Costs associated with the administration of the Taskforce</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>12.30</td>
<td>9.70</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>35.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Costs associated with the delivery of Taskforce outcomes</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>41.20</td>
<td>69.10</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>122.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>53.50</td>
<td>78.80</td>
<td>18.10</td>
<td>157.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Taskforce expenditure for the previous financial years (2012–13 and 2013–14) was $59.03 million. Expenditure for the first quarter of 2014-15 financial year was $19.14 million.

12.1 Taskforce staffing

As at 30 September 2014, the total number of staff with the Taskforce was 174 people, a full time equivalent of 167.81. This figure does not include the Taskforce Leadership Group. The projected staffing level required to meet Taskforce outcomes is 185 staff, with an expected change in the staffing skills profile over the life of the Taskforce.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taskforce Group</th>
<th>Number of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Group</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restorative Engagement Group</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complainant Support Group</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reparation Group</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime Group</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Liaison</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADFA and HMAS Leeuwin Group</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Communications and Strategic Support</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal and Coordination</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes Delivery Group</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations Group</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>174</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. Other observations and conclusions

13.1 DLA Piper Review – systemic issues and recommendations

This section of the report provides a brief discussion of the action taken by the Taskforce in relation to the recommendations and systemic issues identified by the DLA Piper Review. This section should be read in conjunction with the broader discussion of systemic issues contained in Part C of this report and the Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

On 31 October 2014, the Senate Committee released its report on processes to support victims of abuse in Defence (see above section 11.4). One of the recommendations made by the Senate Committee was that the Minister for Defence table a formal substantive response to the systemic issues identified by the DLA Piper Review after this report is released.

The discussion below should demonstrate the ongoing work that the Taskforce has undertaken in relation to these issues. This work will continue beyond 30 November 2014.

The DLA Piper Review was the immediate precursor to the establishment of the Taskforce, as well as a number of reviews into Defence culture. It is important to note that recommendations and systemic issues identified by DLA Piper were made before the Taskforce was established. The Taskforce has been guided by its Terms of Reference in relation to the scope of its work, including in determining what action to take in relation to specific aspects of the DLA Piper Review.

It should also be noted that since the DLA Piper Report was published, Defence has continued to consider and address systemic and other issues that have come to light in through the various reviews that have been conducted into Defence’s culture.

(a) DLA Piper Recommendations

Since its establishment, the Taskforce has closely considered the material gathered by DLA Piper, particularly the information and recommendations made in Volume 2 of the DLA Piper Review. In fact, DLA Piper transferred the cases it considered in the course of its review to the Taskforce for assessment where the individual complainant provided consent for this to occur. These complaints were independently assessed by the Taskforce and complainants were given the opportunity to provide further information to support their complaint.

It is the Taskforce’s view that the majority of the recommendations made by the DLA Piper Review were satisfied by the establishment of the Taskforce itself. For example, the Taskforce is an external review body [Recommendation 6] that has accepted and considered fresh and additional allegations of abuse occurring up to April 2011, in addition to those already made to DLA Piper [Recommendation 1 and 3].

In addition, the Taskforce provides outcomes largely corresponding with those recommended by DLA Piper, including:

- private facilitated conferences between complainants and senior Defence representatives arranged under the Restorative Engagement Program, which provide the complainant with the opportunity to have their complaint of abuse heard, acknowledged and responded to – sometimes including apologies (Recommendation 8 and 10);
- access to counselling under the national Counselling Program (Recommendation 9 and 10); and
- a Reparation Payment of up to $50 000 made under the Reparation Scheme (Recommendation 10).

The DLA Piper Review made two recommendations that have been relevant to the development of the Restorative Engagement Program (discussed above at section 9.3). For example, the Taskforce provides guidance to Defence representatives on how to deliver an apology, taking into account the key criteria outlined by the Law Commission of Canada [Recommendation S4]. In addition, a Facilitator accredited by the Taskforce works with both the complainant and a senior Defence representative to ensure any acknowledgement or apology meets the individual needs of the complainant (Recommendation S5).
The Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy, which is tabled alongside this report, contains discussion of Defence’s failure to investigate or take appropriate action in relation to complaints of abuse because of the way in which Defence Instructions were being interpreted and applied. In that report, the Taskforce notes that Defence have taken steps to address this issue, including by modifying Defence Instruction [General] PERS 35-4 on ‘Reporting and management of sexual misconduct including sexual offences’, which was identified by the DLA Piper Review as a priority matter of concern (Recommendation 2).

(b) Systemic Issues

The DLA Piper Review identified 35 systemic issues, each of which has been considered by the Taskforce in the course of its work. However, as noted in previous reports, the Taskforce has exercised its judgement in relation to whether action should - and could - be taken in line with the Terms of Reference. The Taskforce has also publicly released information about systemic issues it has identified in complaints received in the Report on abuse at HMAS Leeuwin, the Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy and this report.

The Taskforce has considered each of the systemic issues identified by DLA Piper. It is important to note that these issues were identified in 2011. Since then, Defence has made significant progress in dealing with systemic issues giving rise to abuse. The Taskforce has engaged extensively with Defence in relation to the implications of its work for the Pathway to Change strategy (discussed at section 10.4) and in relation to more recent reviews that have been undertaken into Defence’s systems.

In particular, the Taskforce notes the significance of the establishment of the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office (SeMPRO), which was established to coordinate timely responses, victim support, education, policy, practice and reporting for any misconduct of a sexual nature and to create a mechanism for restricted reporting of sexual misconduct (see Issue 11). The Taskforce also acknowledges the work that Defence is currently undertaking in relation to the connection between mental health and abuse (Issue 5). This is an issue that also informs all of the Taskforce’s interactions with complainants and was influential in the establishment of the Complainant Support Group, which is discussed in detail at section 8.

With the release of this report, and the Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy, it will be clear that a number of the systemic issues identified by the DLA Piper Review have been confirmed by the work of the Taskforce. For example, the Taskforce is particularly concerned by the high incidence of abuse of young people during the initial stages of their careers in Defence, particularly in training establishments (Issue 1).

This report also contains the Chair of the Taskforce’s recommendation in relation to the establishment of a Royal Commission into abuse at ADFA (section 13.3(g)), which involved the consideration of certain issues identified by the DLA Piper Review (see Issues 3 and 4). The Taskforce Chair has written to, and spoken with, Defence in relation to some of the specific systemic issues identified by the DLA Piper Review. For example, on 26 February 2014, the Chair wrote to the then CDF and the Secretary of the Department of Defence in relation to the connection between mental health and abuse (Issue 5). This is an issue that also informs all of the Taskforce’s interactions with complainants and was influential in the establishment of the Complainant Support Group, which is discussed in detail at section 8.

The Taskforce Chair has also written to Defence to confirm the progress that has been made in relation to some of the specific issues identified by the DLA Piper Review, in particular the issues relating to Defence’s internal systems and processes. While these issues are primarily a matter for Defence, the Taskforce will continue to liaise with Defence and others in relation to systemic issues in relation to Defence’s progress on Pathway to Change strategy.

As has already been noted, the work of the Taskforce is dictated by the Terms of Reference, and the primary purpose of the Taskforce is to assess and respond to complaints of abuse in Defence.

While each of the systemic issues identified by the DLA Piper Review are matters of general concern, in some cases the Taskforce was either unable to take specific action or did not receive additional material raising similar matters. For example, the Taskforce was not in a position to consider how to provide alleged perpetrators suffering mental health problems with appropriate assistance because it does not deal directly with perpetrators (Issue 6). Further, while the
Taskforce agrees that the issue of witnesses failing to take action to prevent abuse is concerning, the material before the Taskforce (including that from the DLA Piper Review) did not reveal many witnesses who did not take action. Therefore, the Taskforce was unable to comment on that aspect of Issue 3 with any accuracy.

13.2 Information and data sharing

(a) The Case Management System

The Taskforce has received a significant volume of personal information from complainants and Defence. The Taskforce has included this information into the Case Management System (CMS) and extracted key data from the narrative of complaints and their administration to aid in searching and reporting.

The CMS was designed to aid the Taskforce in achieving meaningful outcomes in line with the Terms of Reference. The CMS has the potential to provide valuable information relating to the nature of abuse contained in complaints received by the Taskforce and the progress of the programs and outcomes administered by the Taskforce.

The CMS captures demographic information about the complaints submitted and the individuals involved such as the location and date range of an incident and details of persons of interest. It provides an understanding of the nature of abuse reported and aids in meeting the Taskforce Terms of Reference regarding contributing to Defence in its Pathway to Change strategy and reporting on potential systemic issues.

The CMS also assists in the administration of outcome delivery including tasking and workflows and records who has taken action in relation to a complaint, what action was undertaken and how long it took.

This administrative information is captured to ensure that complaints were actioned in a timely manner and to aid in forecasting outcome delivery. In doing this, the Taskforce has recorded valuable information that can be used in an academic review, providing an understanding of the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs administered.

Finally, the CMS records outcomes and decisions made in respect to individual complaints.

In 2013, the Taskforce Operations Group considered whether it would be possible to create a depersonalised version of the CMS. However, it was ultimately concluded that depersonalising or redacting the information to the point necessary to protect the privacy of complainants would significantly compromise the functionality of the CMS.

Part C of this report provides an overview of the complaints received, using information gathered from the CMS. The Taskforce hopes that this information will provide a valuable resource to Defence as they progress with their Pathway to Change strategy.

(b) Information sharing with the Department of Veterans’ Affairs

A key Taskforce priority beyond 30 November 2014 will be to maintaining an information and data exchange between the Taskforce and Defence. Maintaining this exchange of information is vital to ensuring that the lessons learned as a result of the Taskforce’s work are captured and analysed, with a view to achieving meaningful cultural change within Defence.

Additionally, the Taskforce is conscious of the need to embed processes to ensure that the diverse array of information it has gathered may be handled and stored securely.

The information contained in the CMS is already being put to use outside of the Taskforce in a trial process with DVA.

Section 11.2 of this report provides an overview of the statistical information that the Taskforce is providing to DVA to assist with the process of assessing claims for pensions and other entitlements.

The Taskforce continues to work with DVA to determine how best to provide statistical information to support their assessment of claims. There are a number of issues to be worked through in relation to privacy and the provision of information. The Taskforce is committed to assisting DVA to gain any relevant information and will continue to build on ways to effectively share this information, having regard to the Taskforce’s privacy obligations.
[c] Information sharing with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

In this report, the Taskforce has noted with concern that a number of complainants experienced abuse as young people during the initial stages of their careers in Defence, particularly in training establishments.

The Taskforce has engaged extensively with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Child Abuse Royal Commission). The Taskforce has worked with the Child Abuse Royal Commission to develop an information sharing protocol. This protocol facilitates the exchange of information where the Taskforce holds information about a matter that may be of interest to the Child Abuse Royal Commission. The Taskforce has made clear on its website that while it performs a separate function to the Child Abuse Royal Commission, there is nothing to prevent a complainant from participating in that process while pursuing an outcome through the Taskforce.

In June 2014, the Taskforce released its Report on abuse at HMAS Leeuwin, which was based upon the personal accounts of junior recruits who trained at HMAS Leeuwin, a junior recruit training establishment operated by the Royal Australian Navy in Fremantle, Western Australia from 1960 to 1984. On 24 June 2014, and subsequently, the Chair of the Taskforce met with the Chief Royal Commissioner, Justice Peter McClellan AM, QC to discuss the contents of the Report on abuse at HMAS Leeuwin. Since then, the Taskforce has engaged in ongoing discussions with the Child Abuse Royal Commission about HMAS Leeuwin.

13.3 Royal Commission

Under its Terms of Reference, the Taskforce is required to advise whether a Royal Commission into any categories of allegations raised with the DLA Piper Review or the Taskforce, in particular the ‘24 ADFA cases’, would be merited. This section considers:

- the nature and purpose of a Royal Commission;
- common arguments for a Royal Commission into abuse in Defence;
- what might be achieved by a Royal Commission into abuse in Defence;
- what is unlikely to be achieved by a Royal Commission into abuse in Defence;
- conclusions regarding a general Royal Commission into abuse in Defence; and
- conclusions regarding a Royal Commission into abuse at ADFA.

[a] The nature and purpose of a Royal Commission

A Royal Commission is a public inquiry into an issue of particular significance. A Royal Commission is established under specific legislation. A Commonwealth Royal Commission would be established under the Royal Commissions Act 1902 (Cth) (Royal Commissions Act) by the issuing of Letters Patent by the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, has considerable powers, and is usually chaired by a sitting or retired Judge. Royal Commissions ordinarily use open processes of investigation, including public hearings, and have coercive powers to collect and procure information, make witnesses attend hearings and give evidence. Royal Commissions ordinarily seek community input, and release public reports.

A Royal Commission can take an inquisitorial form, established for example, to determine the cause of a catastrophic event such as a major accident or bushfire; or they can consider a major policy question and provide advice and options to a government. Some Royal Commissions take both forms. Where a Royal Commission considers a systemic issue, its report and recommendations will focus on policy reform in a particular area.

Important features of a Royal Commission established under the Royal Commissions Act include that:

- a Royal Commission has the power to compel witnesses to appear and give evidence and produce documents and other things;
• a Royal Commission may apply for the issue of search warrants;3
• a witness before a Royal Commission may not refuse to answer a question or produce anything on the ground of self-incrimination, unless the witness has already been charged with a relevant offence which has not been finally dealt with by a court;4
• statements or disclosures made by a witness before a Royal Commission are not admissible against that witness in any civil or criminal proceedings in any court;5
• a Royal Commission may authorise a legal practitioner (lawyer) to appear before it for the purpose of representing any person and that lawyer may examine or cross-examine any witness on any matter which the Commission deems relevant to the inquiry;6
• a person who may potentially be at risk of having an adverse finding made against them by a Royal Commission is ordinarily entitled to be heard in opposition to that, either personally or by a lawyer, including the right to examine or cross-examine witnesses whose evidence is adverse to that person;7
• while ordinarily, evidence before a Royal Commission is given in public, a Royal Commission may prohibit the publication of evidence given before it or the identity of witnesses (this means that even if evidence is given in public, that evidence may not be published in any way if the Commission makes that order);8
• a Royal Commission may communicate information to law enforcement and certain other agencies where it relates to a contravention of a criminal law or one which subjects a person to a civil or administrative penalty;9 and
• a Royal Commission may take evidence in private.10

Amendments to the Royal Commissions Act were made in 2013 to make specific provision for the conduct of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Child Abuse Royal Commission). They included an express power to hold private sessions.11 Information relating to a person obtained at a private session may only be included in a report or recommendation by the Commission if it is de-identified.12 The 2013 amendments apply only to that Royal Commission.

(b) Common arguments for a Royal Commission into abuse in Defence

A number of individuals have made consistent public statements arguing for a Royal Commission into abuse in Defence; either generally across Defence,13 or specifically in relation to abuse occurring at ADFA,14 since the publication of the report of the DLA Piper Review.

The DLA Piper Review was tasked with identifying a range of options for dealing with allegations of abuse, including the possibility of setting up a Royal Commission.15 The DLA Piper Review concluded that a Royal Commission could be appropriate to clarify the following key questions surrounding the ‘24 ADFA cases’:
• whether ‘any of the around 24 persons identified … in 1998 as being suspected of having committed rape are still in the ADF’;
• whether ‘any persons who witnessed and did not intervene to stop rape at ADFA before the 1998 Grey Review are still in the ADF’; and
• if so, how to deal with that situation?16

However, for allegations of abuse after the Grey Review, the DLA Piper Review noted that a Royal Commission was not recommended.17

Public discussion about a Royal Commission into abuse in Defence has included frequent references to what such a Royal Commission might achieve, including that it would:
• hold abusers to account and gather information sufficient to enable action against individual perpetrators;
• send a very strong message to victims that they are not alone;
• generate significant publicity and thus attract more people to come forward;
• identify the nature and scope of abuse within Defence and the systemic issues allowing or contributing to it;
• expose the institutional response of Defence to reports of abuse; and
• in relation to ADFA, address ‘the very real risk’ that the ranks of officers include a significant number of individuals who have raped or otherwise seriously abused other members of the ADF and include officers who have acquiesced in that conduct.

(c) What might be achieved by a Royal Commission into abuse in Defence?

Were there to be a Royal Commission into Defence, a number of the commonly articulated expectations of such a Commission might be achieved. These include that such a Commission might:

• send a very strong message to victims that they are not alone;
• generate significant publicity and thus attract more people to come forward;
• identify the nature and scope of abuse within Defence and the systemic issues allowing or contributing to it; and
• expose the institutional response of Defence to reports of abuse.

(i) Send a strong message to those who have experienced abuse

The establishment of a Royal Commission (into abuse at ADFA or in Defence generally) is likely to send a very strong message to those who have experienced abuse that they are not alone and should not bear the shame of the abuse that they experienced.

However, it should be noted that arguably the Government, Defence and the Taskforce, have sent (and are still sending) this message through the measures that have been established to respond to abuse in Defence (whilst recognising that views differ on whether these measures are sufficient). Complainants to the Taskforce have acknowledged that the establishment and operation of the Taskforce has sent such a message [see section 8].

(ii) Publicity would lead to more individuals who experienced abuse coming forward

There can be no doubt that public hearings of a Royal Commission into abuse within Defence would generate considerable publicity. It is likely that this would cause more individuals who have experienced abuse in Defence to come forward, although estimates as to how many are conjecture.

Since the Government's cut-off date of 31 May 2013, almost 300 people have come to the Taskforce with new complaints of abuse. The Taskforce believes it likely that there are many more people who have not come forward. There are various reasons why individuals who have experienced abuse do not report that abuse, often for decades. For example, they may take many years to feel psychologically or emotionally able to do so. It follows that many may not come forward even to a Royal Commission. People who suffered abuse may continue to come forward for years in the future if there is an avenue for them to do so. The Taskforce believes the Government should provide a future, long-term avenue for individuals to come forward with their personal accounts of abuse in Defence and to receive an appropriate response, as discussed in more detail in section 14.2.

It is important to consider the issues arising in relation to the potential engagement of people who have experienced abuse in Defence with a Royal Commission. It has been the experience of the Taskforce that whilst complainants often want what happened to them to be known (so that it does not happen again), many of them do not want to be identified and do not want to be involved in any police investigation or court or administrative inquiry process.

Were a person who experienced abuse in Defence to give evidence publicly in a Royal Commission, naming their alleged abuser, that person would have to be accorded the right to have their lawyer examine or cross-examine the witness – also publicly, in that situation.
It should not be assumed that a Royal Commission would compel either claimed subjects of abuse or alleged perpetrators to appear before it. One would expect a decision of that kind would depend upon the particular circumstances of the individual case.

It is also important to note that a Royal Commission may take evidence in private. This would mean that the evidence given in private could not be published (including that material which would identify an alleged abuser could not be published). However, this would allow the subjects of abuse to tell their story. In addition, evidence given in private may guide further investigation and in some circumstances may lead to the witness being prepared to subsequently give that evidence in public.

In relation to abuse experienced at ADFA, there have been some media statements by former female officer cadets at ADFA in the 1990s to the effect that they were either unaware of the Taskforce or did not come forward to it, but wish to see a Royal Commission. It is not clear whether they would be prepared to appear in a Royal Commission. The Taskforce accepts that there may well be some women (or, indeed, some men) who would come forward. Having the opportunity to tell their stories to a Royal Commission would be important to them, and certainly if the evidence was given in public, it would add to public awareness of the nature and extent of abuse at ADFA in that period.

(iii) Identify nature and scope of abuse within Defence

The general aim of a Royal Commission is to ascertain facts, report its findings about them and make recommendations for future action. A Royal Commission inquiry would consider and report on systemic and organisational culture issues, rather than provide outcomes in individual cases.

A Royal Commission might well elicit information that would cast a light on the cultural and systemic issues relating to the occurrence of abuse in Defence, and also on issues relating to Defence management (or mismanagement) of reports made to it regarding abuse.

However, it is important to note that there have been many inquiries and reviews which have identified such cultural and systemic issues, including the DLA Piper Review. The work of the Taskforce itself has confirmed that many of the cultural and systemic issues previously identified continue to be issues of concern (as discussed in Part C). Given this previous work, the Taskforce believes that a Royal Commission is unlikely to discover significant cultural and systemic issues which relate to the occurrence of abuse in Defence which have not previously been revealed.

In relation to abuse occurring at ADFA, as a result of the Grey Review and subsequent inquiries and reports – including the Taskforce Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy – it is clear that there was a disturbing incidence of sexual abuse at ADFA from its establishment up to 2011 (the cut-off year for complaints to the Taskforce). The contributing systemic and other causes have been identified, as has the often inadequate organisational response by Defence and the reasons for this.

Whilst it is unlikely that a Royal Commission would add any significant new information or insight of this kind to that which is already known, the investigative powers it could bring to bear could reasonably be expected to illuminate in more detail than has been possible to date, the actual action taken (or not taken) in response to particular instances of alleged abuse, and by whom. This would include not only witnesses to abuse but also those in positions of responsibility and those who had an awareness of what was happening and took no or inadequate action to stop or deal with the abuse. In particular, it would afford an opportunity to ascertain from those in the chain of command or management, what they actually knew about abuse and what they actually did in relation to reports of abuse. A Royal Commission could also productively examine aspects of the military justice system, the response of this system to reports of abuse, and the intersection of this system with the civilian justice system.
(d) What is unlikely to be achieved by a Royal Commission into abuse in Defence?

A commonly articulated expectation of a Royal Commission into abuse in Defence is that it would ‘hold people to account’.

As noted above, Royal Commissions certainly do have extensive powers to obtain information and compel people to answer questions. But their role is to consider issues, and to report and make recommendations in relation to them on the basis of the information obtained. Their ‘findings’ are not legally binding determinations of either fact or law. Nor do they decide whether a criminal investigation will be conducted by police (or anyone else); and they do not lay criminal charges against anyone. These decisions are made by police and Directors of Public Prosecutions respectively.

It is a notorious fact that a very few criminal prosecutions (much less successful ones) flow from Royal Commissions. There are many reasons for this, not the least being that no evidence given by a person to a Royal Commission can be used against that person in any civil or criminal proceeding in a court; and much other evidence given to a Royal Commission is not admissible in a court.

Furthermore, it will not necessarily be the case that allegations against those claimed to be abusers in the ADF would be made public in a Royal Commission. Ordinarily, publication of any evidence which might lead to the identification of a still-serving alleged abuser would likely be suppressed so as not to prejudice any possible criminal investigation or prosecution, or cause unfair prejudice to that person’s reputation. However, a Royal Commission is more likely to hear, in public, evidence from those in the chain in command who it appears were, or should have been aware, of instances of abuse in Defence.

Whilst a number of people have been publicly named in the Child Abuse Royal Commission as alleged abusers, they generally appear to be individuals who are either deceased or who have previously been convicted or at least already charged with sexual abuse offences. The Child Abuse Royal Commission has, however, publicly examined the behaviour and actions of people in response to allegations of abuse, that is, those in positions of power who were told or ought to have known about the abuse.

Although evidence obtained by a Royal Commission might be used in ADF disciplinary or administrative proceedings (because disciplinary tribunals and administrative inquiries are not ‘courts’), those proceedings are not necessarily public. Furthermore, their determinations (that is, the conclusions they reach after having weighed evidence under the specific legal rules that apply) may not be the same as any findings made by a Royal Commission. There would be an appreciable risk that expectations raised by the findings of a Royal Commission might in these circumstances ultimately lead to disappointment and even further distress.

As Part C of this report demonstrates, although some allegations of abuse are likely to relate to events in the present decade, the majority are likely to date back to the 1980s and 1990s and even long before. The recollections of those concerned are likely to be problematic and Defence (and other) records are often missing or incomplete. Probably the majority of those who experienced abuse did not report it, so there will usually have been no supporting material.

In the experience of the Taskforce, many of those who experienced abuse in Defence continue to suffer from the abuse they experienced, and the consequences of it, over years or decades. Some of the consequences can be alcoholism, mental or psychological health issues, drug dependence, and a host of other conditions or circumstances which could be argued to affect the reliability of any evidence they may give.

It is important to note that given its extensive powers and the opportunity for more people who have experienced abuse to come forward, it is possible that a Royal Commission might gather more information than is presently known about abuse in Defence. A Royal Commission might bring forward multiple individuals who experienced sexual or other abuse alleging similar abuse by the same alleged abuser/s. However, for the reasons set out above, it does not follow that would necessarily increase the prospect of action being taken.
(e) Conclusion: General Royal Commission into abuse in Defence

For the reasons which have been examined above, the Taskforce does not recommend a general Royal Commission into abuse in Defence (the Taskforce recommendation in relation to a Royal Commission into abuse in ADFA appears below). A Royal Commission into abuse in Defence generally (general Royal Commission), with no limitation as to time, place or person, would be an enormous, resource-intensive and extremely expensive exercise, likely to take some years. Of course, those considerations would not be a reason for not having one, if the benefits were seen to outweigh them.

Insofar as some Taskforce complainants have expressed a desire for a general Royal Commission, they have often done so more because they want it to inquire into the way in which DVA handles claims for pensions or benefits based on alleged abuse in Defence, and the interaction between DVA, Defence and the Government generally. Those are commonly-held and important concerns. They raise complex issues. A general Royal Commission which did not encompass those aspects would not satisfy those individuals (Taskforce complainants or other) who express a desire for one for that reason; to include those issues in the Terms of Reference would add substantially to the complexity, cost and duration of a Royal Commission. The Taskforce considers those issues could be more effectively and expeditiously addressed by a joint Departmental or Ministerial Inquiry or working group.

In all the circumstances, in the opinion of the Taskforce, the prospect that a general Royal Commission would throw useful light on individual cases of alleged abuse, or the (mis)management of them, [useful in the sense of facilitating practical outcomes in those cases], is negligible.

The Taskforce notes this was one of the reasons the DLA Piper Review did not recommend the establishment of a Royal Commission.19

The question then is whether such a Royal Commission could add new information about systemic or cultural issues in Defence relating to abuse or Defence’s response to it.

As stated above Defence has been the subject of numerous inquiries and reviews about this – including the DLA Piper Review and the work of the Taskforce itself. This report itself provides a comprehensive review of the incidence of abuse in Defence across services establishments and locations, and identifies cultural and systemic factors which encouraged, allowed or facilitated it. This information supplements that already available and should inform cultural change in Defence. The Taskforce considers it unlikely that a general Royal Commission would add significantly new information about systemic or cultural issues relating to abuse in Defence or the response of Defence to it.

The Taskforce accepts that in recent years, Defence has undoubtedly been making genuine and significant efforts to achieve cultural change and deal with the problem of abuse, especially sexual and serious physical assault. The Taskforce agrees with the view expressed in the DLA Piper Review Report that:

If it were thought that there were an endemic problem of sexual and other assaults in Defence that Defence is not making adequate attempts to deal with or is covering up, it may be that the only way to ascertain the extent of the problem would be by establishing a Royal Commission to inquire into the problem. ... We can observe that the material before us does not demonstrate this to be the case. The material before us does not indicate that conduct constituting sexual and other assaults is presently widespread in Defence.20

This is not to say there is presently no incidence of sexual or other abuse in Defence – clearly there has been, and still is. But reporting of such incidents appears to be improving and in many cases, necessary action is being taken.

The Taskforce considers that Defence should be given the opportunity to continue the measures it has been, and is, taking to effect cultural change in this area. However, if it were to become evident that those measures were not being effective, or the commitment to implement them was dissipating, or being obstructed, then a general Royal Commission may become necessary. In addition, further consideration should be given to whether a Royal Commission is warranted to examine aspects of the military justice system, the response of this system to reports of abuse, and the intersection of this system with the civilian justice system.
The Taskforce considers that a final recommendation in respect of the need for a general Royal Commission would best be made shortly prior to the conclusion of its work.

(f) Issues relating to a Royal Commission into abuse at ADFA

Since the publication of the report of the DLA Piper Review, there has been frequent commentary on the importance of a complete investigation being held into the sexual abuse that is alleged to have occurred at that establishment in the 1990s. Specifically, it has been suggested that a Royal Commission specifically into abuse at ADFA is necessary to remove ‘the shadow of doubt over the fitness to lead of every male officer who went through ADFA between 1986 and 1998’.

(i) The incidence of abuse at ADFA

Whilst the work of the Taskforce has identified that there has been a disproportionately high incidence of abuse at Defence training establishments generally, ADFA is in a unique category. That is because it is the primary tri-service officer training establishment and a significant number of currently-serving officers up to the highest ranks in the ADF are ADFA graduates. The Taskforce Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy confirms that there has been a high level of sexual abuse at ADFA for many years of the establishment’s operation.

As set out in the Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy:

- There was a disturbingly high incidence of sexual abuse of female cadets which occurred at ADFA during the 1990s. The Taskforce is aware of at least 36 women alleged to have experienced sexual abuse between 1991 and 1998, as well a further number of cases where the subject of the abuse is not named.
- In a number of these cases, Defence did not take appropriate disciplinary, administrative or management action; and in some of these cases, reports of sexual abuse were seriously mismanaged by Defence.
- The Taskforce is aware of at least 13 individuals allegedly responsible for perpetrating sexual abuse at ADFA in the 1990s still serving in the Permanent Forces or Active Reserves, and an additional three individuals who have transferred to the Inactive/Standby Reserves.

(ii) Still serving alleged abusers responsible for abuse at ADFA

On the basis of all the information available to it, and its own work (as set out in the Report on abuse in ADFA), the Taskforce accepts there is a very real risk that the ranks of officers in the ADF include a number of individuals who have sexually assaulted or otherwise seriously abused other members of the ADF and include officers who acquiesced in that conduct.

The Taskforce report also shows that Defence documents themselves contain information about (and Defence has had knowledge of since the 1990s):

- individuals who committed serious sexual or physical assaults on others at ADFA; or
- individuals who mismanaged reports of such assaults.

Complaints made to the Taskforce indicate that a number of women did not report the abuse that they experienced to Defence. The Taskforce believes that there may be more women in this category. In addition, the Defence documents do not contain extensive information about:

- those who witnessed such assaults; or
- individuals who were responsible for conditions which encouraged or allowed such things to happen, or discouraged reporting of them.

Defence has for many years known the identity of some people who experienced sexual assault and some alleged abusers. However there are very likely a significant number of cases of which Defence is not aware.
It should be noted, that even if some individual officers were named as sexual (or physical) abusers by people coming forward to a Royal Commission, that would not mean other individuals who were there at the time were not abusers. It may simply mean that no one had come forward to name them. A Royal Commission will not be able to completely remove the shadow of doubt over the fitness to lead of every male officer who went through ADFA between 1986 and 1998.

(iii) Defence response to abuse at ADFA

The Taskforce is concerned, with respect to allegations of sexual abuse at ADFA, that in most cases it appears that appropriate action was not taken at the time the abuse was reported to Defence. Furthermore, Defence does not appear able to take action relating to the alleged abusers in these cases within existing processes. This is due to a number of factors, including the age of the allegations, most of which occurred 15-20 years ago, and the inherent difficulties in taking action in relation to allegations of sexual abuse.

As discussed further below, the extent to which Defence has been and is aware of individuals alleged to have been responsible for abuse at ADFA; the action taken by Defence in response to these allegations, both at the time and since; and the question of what action might now be taken, are matters that might be usefully considered by a Royal Commission.

As noted above, Defence has held documents relating to many of these cases of sexual abuse since the 1990s. In addition, the Taskforce has provided Defence with detailed case summaries of 33 cases of sexual abuse at ADFA in the 1990s (and made recommendation for further investigation or other action in 17 cases).

In September 2014, Defence informed the Taskforce that it had reviewed 19 of the 33 cases of sexual abuse at ADFA in the 1990s referred by the Taskforce (these 19 cases were referred to Defence on 16 October 2013). Defence informed the Taskforce that:

- it has undertaken a full review of all material available relating to these cases;
- action under the Defence Force Discipline Act is no longer possible as the five year statutory limitation period has passed;
- if complainants provide consent to be contacted by Defence it may be possible to refer matters to the civilian police, and that Defence is working with two women to obtain relevant court or civilian police records to assist Defence in determining what, if any, administrative action is possible;
- eight matters are still under consideration, however without the consent of the subject, Defence ability to obtain evidence to support administrative action was constrained (options were still being considered for one matter than three others were likely to be referred to the Service Chief); and
- no further action would be taken in relation to 11 of the 19 matters, for a number of reasons, including a lack of evidence, a lack of a clear allegation, an inability to identify an alleged perpetrator, or the lack of consent of the subject of abuse to be contacted by Defence.

The Taskforce appreciates that there are real difficulties for Defence in responding to allegations of sexual abuse at ADFA in the 1990s, due to factors such as the amount of time that has passed, the nature of some of the evidence available, and issues related to obtaining the consent of complainants to pursue these allegations. The Taskforce also appreciates that Defence must operate within the legal framework within which administrative or disciplinary action occurs.

However, the fact remains that many of these allegations were not appropriately managed at the time they were made; and the constraints on Defence’s capacity to respond to them now means that a significant cluster of very serious allegations within Defence have never been thoroughly investigated. Further, individuals alleged to have committed or acquiesced in very serious offences have never been called to account.
[g] Conclusion: Royal Commission into abuse at ADFA

Given the actual or perceived lack of capacity of Defence to deal with the issues outlined above, the Taskforce has come to the view that the only means of doing so is by way of a Royal Commission. The Taskforce believes that a Royal Commission is the only means of ensuring a thorough and complete investigation of abuse that has occurred at ADFA. A Royal Commission would be able to consider whether existing processes (either within or external to Defence) are adequate to now appropriately deal with the legacy of allegations of serious abuse occurring at ADFA, and if not, to recommend measures which would be able to do so.

The Terms of Reference should include all allegations of abuse at ADFA since its inception in 1986.

The intent would be to utilise the powers of the Royal Commission to:

- investigate abuse at ADFA both generally and in respect of particular cases;
- identify alleged abusers (especially those still serving), witnesses, managers and others with relevant knowledge;
- make recommendations about further action that might be taken both in respect to historical allegations generally; and
- make recommendations regarding current policies and procedures relating to sexual and other abuse at ADFA.

Such a Royal Commission would be confined in its scope and purpose. Nonetheless, it would necessarily involve legal representation for those against whom allegations are made, whether of abuse, mismanagement of reports of abuse, or systemic failures allowing, encouraging or contributing to abuse.

In relation to allegation of sexual abuse at ADFA in the 1990s, given the advice provided by police and other agencies working with those who have experienced sexual assault that seeking out alleged subjects of abuse could cause more harm, it is likely to be inappropriate for a Royal Commission to compel a person who allegedly experienced sexual assault in the 1990s to testify, as in many cases these women:

- did not make a complaint at the time or did not wish any action to be taken in relation to their report of assault;
- have not come forward to either the DLA Piper Review or the Taskforce; and/or
- may not wish to now give evidence about an allegation of abuse that occurred between 15–20 years ago.

However, notwithstanding this, the Taskforce considers that a Royal Commission into abuse at ADFA is needed. Indeed, it would be expected that a Royal Commission into sexual and other serious abuse at ADFA would generate publicity which would be likely to encourage those who experienced sexual abuse or witnesses at ADFA who have not previously come forward, to do so. They would include affording those who experienced sexual abuse or witnesses an opportunity to tell their stories of such abuse either confidentially (in private hearing or with their identities suppressed) or in public.

By virtue of media reporting of any evidence given in public hearings, they would include adding to public awareness of the nature and extent of abuse which occurred at ADFA, and sending a message to those who experienced abuse that they are not alone.

A Royal Commission would not itself ‘hold abusers to account’ and nor would it be likely to realistically result in doing so by way of facilitating significant criminal prosecutions or successful disciplinary or administrative action. However, on balance, the Taskforce is of the view that ultimately the only means of ensuring confidence that the very allegations of very serious abuse at ADFA can be thoroughly and completely investigated, and appropriately dealt with, is by way of a Royal Commission.

The Taskforce understands that a Royal Commission into abuse at ADFA would necessarily take many months to complete its work. However, it should not delay the delivery of practical outcomes for individual Taskforce complainants, and current measures implementing broader cultural and systemic change generally within Defence, informed also by the work of the Taskforce.
The Taskforce recommends that the Government establish a Royal Commission to inquire into, report and make recommendations in respect of allegations of abuse, and the management of reports of allegations of abuse, at ADFA from its inception to the present day.

2 Royal Commissions Act 1902 (Cth), s 2.
3 Above, s 4.
4 Above, s 6A.
5 Above, s 6DD.
6 Above, s 6FA.
7 Annetts v McCann (1990) 170 CLR 596.
8 Above, note 2, s 6D (3).
9 Above, s 6P.
10 Above, s 6D[5].
11 Above, s 60B.
12 Above, s 60J.
14 Transcript of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee Hearing, Evidence from Dr Gary Rumble, Parliament House, Canberra, 13 August 2014, accessed 4 November 2014, http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;db=COMMITTEES;id=committees%2Fcommsen%2F4ede120f-292c-454f-8555-6051593efb1d%2F0002;query=Id%3A%22committees%2Fcommsen%2F4ede120f-292c-454f-8555-6051593efb1d%2F0000%22, p 12 (‘Senate Committee Transcript’). In his evidence before the Senate Committee on 26 September 2014 Dr Gary Rumble broadened that to a view that a Royal Commission should be held into abuse in Defence generally.
16 Above, p 121.
17 Above, p 162.
19 Rumble, McKean and Pearce, note 15, p 162.
20 Above, p 218.
21 Senate Committee Transcript, note 14, p 13.
22 Above, p 13.
14. Legacy issues

Clause (viii) of the Taskforce Terms of Reference requires that the Chair of the Taskforce report to the Attorney-General and Minister for Defence on whether, and in what form, the Taskforce should continue beyond its initial period and the funding that would be required. Information relating to the Taskforce’s funding is provided at section 12 of this report.

The initial period of the Taskforce was for 12 months from 26 November 2012. Since then, the Attorney-General and Minister for Defence have approved two extensions. The current extension is to 30 November 2014, although the budget funding has been approved for Taskforce operations and programs to run out to June 2016.

There are therefore two aspects to the question: the first is to cover the short-term period from 30 November 2014 to 30 June 2016; the second is to address the long-term situation after 30 June 2016.

At the time of drafting, the Minister for Defence and Attorney-General had not yet made an announcement about the leadership of the Taskforce beyond 30 November. However, the Taskforce has included the recommendation below in order to satisfy the requirement under the Terms of Reference described above.

14.1 Work of the Taskforce from 30 November 2014 to 30 June 2016

The primary function of the Taskforce is to assess the findings of the DLA Piper Review and the material gathered by it, and any additional material available to the Taskforce concerning complaints of sexual and other forms of abuse by Defence personnel alleged to have occurred prior to 11 April 2011, and to determine, in close consultation with complainants, appropriate actions in response to those complaints.

Approximately 2400 complainants came forward to the Taskforce (including most of the 775 who came forward to the DLA Piper Review).

By direction of the Attorney-General and Minister for Defence, no new complaints of abuse could be received by the Taskforce after 31 May 2013.

As noted at section 7, the assessment of complaints is almost complete.

By 30 November 2014, all Taskforce outcome programs will have been developed and operating; all major policy decisions will have been made; and all major contract procurement processes and negotiations will have been completed.

Taskforce operations and programs will necessarily continue after 30 November 2014. For example, current Taskforce forecasting is that:

- complainants will still be seeking approval for, and receiving, counselling sessions provided under the national Defence Abuse Counselling Program until June 2016;
- an estimated 800 Restorative Engagement Conferences between senior Defence representatives and complainants will have to be arranged and held;
- complainants will continue to require support from the Taskforce Complainant Support Group;
- Reparation Payments should be complete by June 2015;
- there will be some 500 cases requiring assessment for possible referral to CDF for consideration of disciplinary or administrative action;
- administrative staff will be required to oversee ongoing governance, contractual information technology and financial matters, and to provide logistical support for Restorative Engagement Conferences until 30 June 2016; and
there will need to be continuing analysis and reporting of Taskforce data on the implications of its work for Defence’s Pathway to Change strategy and Defence culture and practices as mandated by clause [vi] of the Terms of Reference.

However, despite this ongoing work, it is clear that the policy and program development work of the Taskforce will effectively be complete by 30 November 2014.

As noted in Part A of this report, the Taskforce was never intended by Government to be a permanent or even a long-term entity. It would make sense at this point to move the Taskforce into a transitional phase of ongoing established operations and programs to conclude on 30 June 2016.

Given that the current contractual terms of the Chair and two of the three other members of the Leadership Group4 will conclude on 30 November 2014, it is recommended that these contracts not be further extended and that the responsibility for the Taskforce under its Terms of Reference be transferred to an existing single independent statutory office holder until 30 June 2016.

This proposal would allow the Taskforce to continue delivering outcomes to complainants without delays caused by changes in staffing, resourcing or funding.

The question is what independent statutory office that could appropriately be. Clearly, the functions of the Taskforce could not be transferred to Defence or any agency which is part of, or identified as part of, Defence. Amongst other issues, many complainants have provided their information to the Taskforce on the condition that it is not disclosed to Defence.

This section of the report discusses two independent statutory offices that might be considered to house the Taskforce:

• the Inspector General of the ADF (IG-ADF); and
• the Defence Force Ombudsman.

Although the IG-ADF is an independent statutory appointment in the sense that the Office is not subject to the military chain of command, nor direction in the conduct of its reviews, inquiries or investigations, it is part of the Defence establishment. The IG-ADF reports directly to the CDF and the bulk of the staff of the Office of the IG-ADF are serving permanent and Reserve military officers. Further, the delivery of the Taskforce Counselling Program and Restorative Engagement Program, as well as the provision of complainant support by Case Coordinators, would not be a good ‘fit’ with the Office of the IG-ADF.

The IG-ADF conducts reviews, investigations and inquiries; it does not deliver outcomes to individuals. Complainant confidentiality would be problematic and the Taskforce threshold ‘plausibility test’ would not sit comfortably with the IG-ADF inquisitorial approach to complaint determination, applying a different (and higher) standard of proof.

These are strong arguments against vesting responsibility for the continuing operation of the Taskforce in the IG-ADF, even in the short-term. That option is not recommended.

An independent statutory office with a specific statutory responsibility in relation to Defence is the Defence Force Ombudsman (DFO), established by section 19B of the Ombudsman Act 1976 (Cth). By that section, the DFO shall be the person who holds the office of Commonwealth Ombudsman. The position is currently held by Mr Colin Neave.

The functions of the DFO are to investigate complaints made to him under the Ombudsman Act and to perform such other functions as are conferred on him by that Act or the regulations under it, or another Act or regulations made under another Act.6

The continuing operations of the Taskforce until 30 June 2016 could be vested in the DFO by a regulation made under the Defence Act 1903 (Cth). There would be no change in the structure or operations of the Taskforce. The key practical change would be that the Executive Director of the Taskforce would be responsible to the DFO instead of a Chair.
Locating responsibility for the Taskforce under the DFO from 30 November 2014 would sensibly allow the Taskforce operations and programs to run to completion by 30 June 2016 and facilitate informed reporting on whether they should continue beyond that date and, if so, in what form. It would involve little physical, financial or other delay or disruption to the work of the Taskforce, or Defence.

In summary, transferring responsibility for the Taskforce to the DFO would:

- allow the Chair and the Leadership Group to conclude on 30 November 2014 (with consequent financial savings);
- allow all outstanding Taskforce programs to run out to completion by 30 June 2016;
- maintain the independence of the Taskforce from Defence and AGD;
- maintain existing internal and external work processes and relationships;
- provide appropriate high-level independent management of the Taskforce external to Defence;
- locate responsibility for the Taskforce in a statutory office relevant to Defence;
- maintain the Taskforce’s independence from Defence;
- preserve appropriate and secure control of all Taskforce records and data by an independent agency;
- be cost-effective insofar as it involves actual savings and no additional costs; and
- afford an opportunity for the DFO to report to government on whether Taskforce programs should be continued, and, if so, in what form, after June 2016.

While this recommendation would allow the Taskforce to complete its work, there remains the vexed question of what the Government should do about the subjects of abuse in Defence who came forward after 31 May 2013, or have not yet done so, and in particular, whether that cut-off date should be extended or removed altogether. To date almost 300 people have attempted to bring their complaints of abuse to the Taskforce after the cut-off date. The Taskforce would expect more people to come forward if the opportunity to do so was given to them.

The Senate Committee has recommended that the Government should extend the Taskforce and allow new complainants to make claims up to 30 June 2015. The Taskforce notes that it is ultimately a matter for the Minister for Defence and Attorney-General to determine whether this cut-off date should be changed. However, it does note that accepting new complaints would cause substantial delays in the delivery of outcomes, particularly in relation to the Restorative Engagement Program. Given the high volume of interest in the Restorative Engagement Program and the careful approach that must be taken in relation to ensuring that complainants are ready to participate, some Taskforce complainants have been waiting for their conference for a substantial period of time. Allowing new complainants to access the outcomes provided by the Taskforce would only exacerbate that.

However, the Taskforce does agree that people who missed the cut-off date should be able to have their complaints appropriately responded to by the Government and Defence. This matter is discussed in more detail below.

### 14.2 Work of the Taskforce after 30 June 2016

Although the Taskforce will be better positioned as it moves closer to 30 June 2016 to make comprehensive recommendations on programs or measures that could be continued once it concludes, this section of the report contains some preliminary observations that may assist future consideration of this issue.

First, the Taskforce now has a substantial amount of data, ranging from personal accounts of abuse; Defence personnel and medical records; internal memoranda; inquiry reports and other Defence documentation; to media reports and other information which may or may not be in the public domain. Although much of this is not confidential, a very great deal of it is confidential, subject to privacy legislation and is sensitive personal information.
The Taskforce’s digital records (in TRIM) and the CMS, discussed at section 13.2 above, provide a powerful resource for continuing analysis and de-identified reporting well into the future and after the conclusion of the Taskforce itself.

There are obvious questions about how this will be managed after June 2016, and by whom.

The Taskforce documents and other data are held by it on behalf of the Minister for Defence. Its digital data and IT programs are run on AGD servers (but to which only the Taskforce has access). Self-evidently, all of this material cannot be physically located in the Minister’s office and nor should it be left with AGD. The material cannot be delivered to Defence - many complainants expressly do not want their information passed to Defence.

Apart from the issue of storage and control of the information after June 2016, there are questions relating to managing access to, and analysing and reporting on, this information.

These – and other issues – will have to be the subject of further recommendations to Government as the Taskforce draws closer to June 2016, but for the present it is important to be mindful of them when determining what arrangements are appropriate from 30 November 2014 to June 2016.

There are other considerations.

The experience of the Taskforce has confirmed the long-accepted understanding that those who have experienced abuse may take many years – often decades – to get to a point at which they can report or talk about it. It follows that there are likely to be many subjects of abuse in Defence who have not come forward to the DLA Piper Review or to the Taskforce. As noted above, almost 300 people came to the Taskforce with complaints of abuse after the Government’s cut-off date of 31 May 2013. It is likely that other subjects of past abuse will continue to come forward when they feel able to do so, for many years into the future.

The Taskforce considers that the Government and Defence should develop and implement processes to enable them to do that, and to have their complaints appropriately responded to.

Experience elsewhere may provide some useful ideas on how that could be done. The Northern Ireland Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry (HIA) is undertaking work which in many respects is similar to that of the Taskforce. One interesting feature of it is the use of an ‘Acknowledgement Forum’ comprised of a 4-person panel which provides a place where individuals who experienced abuse can recount their experiences within institutions. It is an opportunity for them to recount their experience on a confidential basis.

Although the process used by the HIA differs to that used by the Taskforce, the concept of a standing ‘Acknowledgement Forum’ Panel (Panel), which is independent of Defence and to which those who experienced abuse could confidentially recount their experience of abuse – knowing that their account will be used as part of a process to inform systemic or cultural change in Defence – is worth considering.

Notwithstanding that reporting of sexual and other abuse within Defence has improved, it is likely some (even many) still-serving members of the ADF are reluctant to report their abuse. This situation is possibly even more common amongst former members of the ADF.

The primary responsibility for dealing with abuse in Defence must lie with Defence itself. Whatever the reporting and related processes may be, they will not be successful unless:

- all members of the ADF, from Recruits upwards, are brought to a real understanding that any form of abuse is wrong and must not be accepted nor acquiesced in;
- all members are empowered to intervene in or report abuse, with the confidence they will be supported in so doing and will not suffer any adverse consequences;
- reports of abuse are actioned immediately, fairly and effectively; and
- those alleging abuse are properly supported not only through any investigative or other process, but for so long as they require support.
Despite the primary responsibility for dealing with abuse being with Defence itself, provision must be made for an alternative avenue for complaints of abuse (in addition to police). The DFO would be a logical option.

Within the framework of the Taskforce recommendation that responsibility for it post-30 November 2014 be vested in the DFO, such a Panel could potentially be located in the office of the DFO.

The Taskforce programs discussed in this report have been innovative and effective (see section 9 for further information). Those are the Defence Abuse Reparation Payment Scheme; the Defence Abuse Restorative Engagement Program; and the national Defence Abuse Counselling Program.

None of these can be continued indefinitely in their present form. Together with other Taskforce elements, they comprise a suite of separate, but interdependent components.

The Restorative Engagement Program is supported by Case Coordinators from the Complainant Support Group and is underpinned by the separate provision of counselling and Reparation Payments. The fact that a Reparation Payment is dealt with independently of and outside the Restorative Engagement Conference is a critical departure from many of the reparation schemes put in place by the Catholic Church in response to child abuse, as is the long-term dedicated support of the complainants by their allocated Case Coordinators.

Although the Taskforce Restorative Engagement Program is yet to come into full ‘production’, the 76 or so conferences held to date have clearly demonstrated the powerful and positive impact of the Program on complainants, their support persons and the Defence representatives (see section 9.3 for further information).

The strong indications are also that by generating in senior Defence representatives a deep personal awareness of the abuse suffered by complainants and the consequences of it on their lives and the lives of their families, the Restorative Engagement Program will significantly affect cultural change in Defence.

The Taskforce experience to date very strongly suggests that the Restorative Engagement Program should be continued beyond 30 June 2016.

The Taskforce considers there are many reasons why the Taskforce Restorative Engagement Program, as such, could not be run internally within Defence. It is based on a very carefully constructed model comprising a range of different but critical elements, underpinned by principle, practice and theory. The conferences are not just ad hoc facilitated meetings.

Further, independence from Defence has been a central feature of the Taskforce Restorative Engagement Program and a primary concern of complainants. Lack of confidence in an internal Defence Restorative Engagement Program would undermine complainants’ trust in the principle of do no further harm, which has informed all aspects of the Taskforce’s work. This lack of confidence could also be expected to go to issues of confidentiality, privacy, and the safety and well-being of complainants.

In addition to the real or perceived conflicts of interest emerging from a Defence-run Restorative Engagement Program, there are other logistical issues that would make it difficult for Defence to run the program in its current form. It is unclear how a Restorative Engagement Program managed by Defence would interact with Defence’s disciplinary and administrative action processes. The Taskforce experience has been that the ‘plausibility test’ is fundamental to the success of the Restorative Engagement Program. However, the difference between this test and the legal standards and principles applied to Defence’s administrative and disciplinary actions processes would be difficult for Defence to reconcile internally.

Should the Government accept the recommendation that responsibility for the Taskforce until 30 June 2016 be vested in the DFO, he would then be well placed to report to the Government in due course on whether the Restorative Engagement Program should continue beyond that date as a function of the DFO, or in some other way.

The current view of the Taskforce is that the Restorative Engagement Program in its current form as developed by the Taskforce could not feasibly be run internally by Defence. However, that is not to say that some modified form, or elements of it, could not be established within Defence.
Indeed, the concept of facilitated conferencing (not mediation or conciliation) based on the Restorative Engagement model, could well be adopted by Defence as part of a Human Resource management, unacceptable conduct, or cultural development program. It would be worthwhile for Defence to consider devising its own abbreviated form of Restorative Engagement to be utilised internally for still-serving members, as part of a suite of interrelated measures involving SeMPRO, disciplinary or administrative action and criminal referral to civilian police.

1 Defence Abuse Response Taskforce, Terms of Reference, note 10, clause (i).
2 Above, clause (iii).
3 The only exception to this are cases which may fall into the category of the ‘ADFA 24’, as discussed above at section 10.3.
4 The fourth member of the Leadership Group is Assistant Commissioner Rudi Lammers of the Australian Federal Police, who is also the Chief Police Officer of ACT Policing. He is on the Leadership Group ex officio.
6 Ombudsman Act 1976 (Cth), s 19C(1).
7 Above, Part 11C.
9 It is anticipated that some 1000 conferences will be held across Army, Navy and Air Force around Australia, with approximately 60 conferences scheduled per month. They should be completed by 30 June 2016.
PART C: THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF ABUSE IN DEFENCE
15. Introduction and overview

15.1 Introduction

An understanding of the nature and extent of abuse reported to have occurred within Defence is fundamental to ongoing efforts to prevent, stop and respond to abuse. It is critical to efforts to achieve cultural change in Defence. Many complainants have told the Taskforce that they want Defence to know about the abuse that they suffered in the hope that it will assist in preventing anyone else from being abused in the future.

For this reason, the Taskforce has completed a detailed statistical and narrative analysis of the information it has received from complainants about abuse that they experienced within Defence. In addition, the Taskforce is required under its Terms of Reference to advise Defence on the implications of its work for the Pathway to Change strategy, achieved in part through this report.

This part of the report provides an overview of the content of complaints of abuse to the Taskforce and is based on the information received directly from complainants and from Defence during the assessment process.

It must be noted at the outset that Defence is a large and complex organisation. The Taskforce recognises that many members of Defence did not experience abuse while serving, but rather have had positive experiences within Defence and have pursued successful military careers. However, the fact remains that a significant number of people have made complaints of serious abuse in all services between the 1940s and the Taskforce cut off date of 11 April 2011. These allegations range from serious physical and sexual abuse through to harassment and bullying. In addition, complainants have told the Taskforce of how important it is to them that Defence appropriately manage reports of abuse and that in many cases their report of abuse was mismanaged. Complainants have told the Taskforce of the very significant short and long-term impacts of abuse.

The Taskforce also recognises that there is significant institutional commitment within Defence to address the issues relating to abuse. This is evident in the Pathway to Change processes and the many other reviews Defence has engaged with in recent years. In addition, Defence leaders have made multiple public statements in recent years indicating that they will take decisive action to respond to abuse when it occurs. Evidence of Defence’s commitment to addressing abuse can also be found in its involvement in the Taskforce’s work, particularly the Restorative Engagement Program, discussed in more detail at section 9.3. The Taskforce trusts that the information provided in this report will assist Defence with its ongoing efforts to prevent, stop and respond to abuse.

This report has been prepared on the basis of the information available as at September 2014. As the Taskforce continues with its work, it is to be expected that further information will come to light. In addition, further analysis of the data available to the Taskforce could be undertaken.

This report does not include analysis of complaints of abuse reported to have occurred at the Australian Defence Force Academy. These complaints are considered in a separate Taskforce report, Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy, published alongside this report.

Part C of this report was provided to the Minister for Defence, the Attorney-General, the Chief of the Defence Force and the Secretary of the Department of Defence on 22 October 2014. The Chief of the Defence Force was invited to consider and comment on the report, in order to afford Defence procedural fairness.

[a] Key issues to be addressed

Part C of this report opens with an overview of the key features of abuse reported to have occurred in Defence, and a statistical overview of the complaints of abuse received by the Taskforce. It then provides:
an analysis of the abuse reported to have occurred in each of the three services;
• an analysis of the abuse reported to have occurred in each of the three services between 2000 and 2011;
• a brief summary of the abuse reported to have occurred in the Department of Defence (Australian Public Service employees);
• a discussion of the management of reports of abuse by Defence; and
• an overview of the impacts of abuse on complainants.

The analysis of abuse within each service includes:
• a statistical overview of the abuse reported to have occurred in that service;
• a discussion of the abuse reported to have occurred while complainants were in initial recruit or employment training;
• a discussion of the abuse reported to have occurred while complainants were in regular service;
• a number of locational case studies; and
• a number of individual case studies.

The discussion of abuse experienced while complainants were in initial recruit or employment training is separated from the discussion of abuse experienced while complainants were in regular service, largely because of the significant proportion of complaints related to abuse that occurred during initial training. As discussed in the overview below and in each service section, complaints relating to recruit and employment training establishments also raise specific issues.

The discussion of abuse that occurred while complainants were undertaking initial recruit and employment training is based on an analysis of complaints from the major recruit and employment training establishments of each service. The discussion of abuse that occurred in regular service is based on an analysis of complaints at the establishments about which the Taskforce received the largest number of complaints. It is important to note that this discussion (and the statistics in these sections) do not relate to the total number of complaints received regarding abuse that occurred while complainants were in initial recruit and employment training or regular service in each of the three services. The analysis, however, includes a sufficient number of complaints to represent broad trends in the abuse reported to have occurred in each service.

A list of the locations and establishments relating to which complaints of abuse were most frequently made is provided at Appendix D.

One of the aims of organising this report by service has been to provide as complete a picture as possible of the abuse that has been reported to have occurred within each service. This has led to some repetition in the discussion of specific types and forms of abuse which occurred in more than one service. Some of the key themes of abuse occurring across the three services are discussed in the overview of complaints of abuse below.

(b) The use of statistics

The analysis provided in Part C of this report is based on those cases that have been assessed to be within the scope of the Taskforce Terms of Reference and including one or more plausible allegations of abuse. As at September 2014, the Taskforce has received complaints of abuse from more than 1650 complainants that included one or more cases which fell into this category.

The complaints assessed as raising one or more plausible allegations of abuse included 2224 cases of abuse. The statistical overview of complaints provided at section 15.5 below provides an analysis of the cases of abuse reported to the Taskforce.

It is important to note that the Taskforce has categorised the abuse experienced by each complainant as forming one or more “cases” of abuse. Many complainants experienced multiple cases of abuse. One case generally relates to abuse experienced at one location (occasionally abuse experienced over a number of locations may be classed as one case of...
abuse if it is part of an ongoing campaign of abuse). It is important to note that one case of abuse may include two or more types of abuse, for example, physical abuse as well as sexual abuse. Further, while some complainants experienced an isolated incident of abuse, many complainants reported that they were subjected to more than one incident of abuse or ongoing abuse without specifying the total number of incidents. Consequently, the number of cases does not represent the number of specific allegations of any type of abuse.

In each of the following sections that provide a narrative analysis of the nature and extent of abuse in Defence, the statistics provided relate to the number of complainants who made an allegation of a specific type of abuse that they experienced at a particular location or establishment within a particular service.

It is important to note that the statistical analysis provided in this report relates to complaints of abuse assessed as at September 2014 as raising a plausible allegation of abuse. The work of the Taskforce is not complete, and the statistics provided in this report will necessarily change when the Taskforce analysis of all complaints is finalised. However, the Taskforce believes that it is sufficiently progressed in its work to present with some confidence a picture of the trends in abuse reported to have occurred within Defence.

The Taskforce recognises that the number of complainants is a small proportion of the total number of people who have served in Defence over the time period considered. The complaints of abuse to the Taskforce do show some broad trends and some specific patterns and practices of abuse. However, the statistical information cited in this report pertains only to abuse reported to the Taskforce. Consequently, statistics in this report should not be directly extrapolated to make definitive conclusions about the nature and extent of abuse occurring in Defence.

(c) The use of quotations and personal experiences

This report includes numerous first-hand accounts of abuse, quoted in short extracts, as well as a few longer case studies at the end of the sections relating to each service. The Taskforce has obtained consent from all complainants whose personal experiences are directly quoted at any length, and steps have been taken to de-identify quotations in order to protect complainants’ privacy. The Taskforce would like to thank all complainants who have shared their personal accounts of abuse. However, it should be noted that in some cases, the most troubling stories of abuse have not been included in this report as the complainant did not provide consent, or because information provided to the Taskforce suggested that complainants were too unwell to seek their consent.

15.2 Background

As noted in section 13 above, in 2011, DLA Piper was asked to conduct an independent review of individual allegations of sexual and other abuse in Defence. In October 2011, DLA Piper presented Volume 1 of its report to the Minister for Defence. The Taskforce was established in November 2012 by the then Minister for Defence as part of the Government’s response to the DLA Piper Review.

The DLA Piper Review identified a number of systemic issues that are discussed in more detail in section 13.1(b) of this report. The analysis of the nature and extent of the abuse described in complaints made to the Taskforce confirms that many of the issues noted by the DLA Piper Review are issues of significant concern. These include, for example, the following:

- the existence of a culture that discouraged the reporting of abuse;
- the lack of positive support for people who reported abuse;
- the risk of superiors within the chain of command abusing their juniors;
- that the consumption of alcohol and other drugs was a factor in much abuse;
- that there is a risk that some alleged abusers are still serving in Defence;
- that many boys and young people have experienced abuse within Defence;
• that there are high levels of under-reporting of abuse and high levels of dissatisfaction with Defence’s management of reports of abuse; and

• that many people who suffered abuse in Defence are likely to suffer mental health problems as a result of their abuse.

The Taskforce notes the important work done by the DLA Piper Review in documenting the reports of abuse that it received, as well as providing analysis and discussion of the issues arising in those reports of abuse. This report builds on and furthers the work done by the DLA Piper Review.

### 15.3 Overview of complaints of abuse

#### (a) Complaints of abuse across services

The Taskforce received reports of abuse that occurred in all three primary Defence services – the Royal Australian Navy (Navy), Australian Army (Army), and Royal Australian Air Force (Air Force). In addition, the Taskforce received a smaller number of reports of abuse relating to Australian Public Service employees in Defence, as well as reports of abuse occurring at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 2224 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse (relating to more than 1650 complainants). This comprises abuse in Defence that occurred across the time period from the 1940s until the Taskforce cut-off date of 11 April 2011.

#### (i) Number of complaints of abuse

In all services, the highest number of complaints of abuse related to abuse that occurred during the 1970s and 1980s, with the highest number of overall complaints relating to the 1980s. Within the services, complaints of abuse that occurred in the Navy reached their highest point during the 1970s (233 cases), while complaints of abuse in the Army and Air Force peaked in the 1980s (238 cases and 113 cases respectively). However, it is also clear from complaints that high levels of abuse have persisted throughout all three services in the more recent decades of the 1990s and 2000s.

The highest number of complaints received by the Taskforce involved abuse reported to have occurred in the Navy. The Taskforce received an equal number of complaints about abuse in the Navy and the Army, even though there are half as many personnel in the Navy as there are in the Army in the current Australian Defence Force (ADF) Permanent Forces, and though there have been significantly less Navy personnel than Army personnel in Defence across the entire time period considered by the Taskforce. Similarly, the Taskforce assessed twice as many cases involving Navy personnel than Air Force personnel, despite these two services being similar in size.

Most of the abuse reported to the Taskforce was experienced by men (74 per cent of all cases); however, women were disproportionately represented in complaints of abuse given the small number of women engaged in each of the services. At the end of 2010–11, women comprised 14 per cent of all Defence personnel, and this number was even lower in the preceding decades. The overrepresentation of women as subjects of abuse was particularly prevalent in cases relating to abuse that occurred between 1990 and 2011. This is significant as it indicates that women in Defence have been, and continue to be, particularly susceptible to abuse on account of their gender.

Many complainants experienced multiple types of abuse over the duration of their time in Defence. This included forms of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, physical abuse, and harassment and bullying. Many complainants experienced abuse during the initial stages of their careers in Defence, particularly during recruit and employment training, with some complainants experiencing ongoing abuse throughout the duration of their time in Defence, across numerous Defence establishments and while on deployment overseas. However, of particular concern to the Taskforce was the high number of complaints of abuse of children and young persons, with 62 per cent of complainants having been 21 years of age or under at the time of the abuse, including 27 per cent of complainants who were under 18 years of age at the time of the abuse.
(iii) Navy

The Navy is the service relating to which the Taskforce received the highest proportion of complaints due to its small number of personnel. Cases relating to abuse in the Navy account for 41 per cent of all cases of abuse that occurred in the Navy, Army or Air Force; however, Navy personnel have historically comprised only approximately 25 per cent of the ADF Permanent Forces. Of complaints made to the Taskforce, the highest levels of abuse in the Navy were experienced during the 1960s and 1970s. The Navy is also the service with the highest number of complaints of sexual abuse, with cases involving sexual abuse comprising almost half of all cases of abuse in the Navy. Similarly, the highest number of cases of sexual harassment were reported to have occurred in the Navy.

The Taskforce has considered certain Navy establishments as being of particular interest due to the high number of complaints about abuse at that location, or particularly prevalent practices of abuse at that location. This includes HMAS Leeuwin, for which the Taskforce released its Report on abuse at HMAS Leeuwin based on the personal accounts of more than 200 complainants who trained at HMAS Leeuwin. Certain types of abuse were reported as commonplace within Navy recruit and employment training establishments, including ‘bed tipping’, ‘nuggetting’, and ‘running the gauntlet’. In addition, the Taskforce is concerned about the high number of complaints of abuse on ships, as well as the practice of initiation rituals which in some cases demonstrate how certain hazing rituals have evolved within the service over time. The Taskforce is also particularly concerned about the high number of complaints of abuse at HMAS Cerberus, the Navy’s premier training establishment.

(iii) Army

The Taskforce received a significant number of complaints involving abuse within the Army. However, the Army also comprises the highest proportion of personnel in Defence. Cases relating to abuse in the Army account for 42 per cent all cases of abuse that occurred in the Navy, Army or Air Force, and Army personnel have historically accounted for approximately 50 per cent of the ADF Permanent Forces. The highest number of complaints of abuse in the Army related to abuse that occurred in the 1980s, and the number of complaints of abuse fell slightly during the 1990s and 2000s. Complaints received by the Taskforce suggest a high incidence of physical abuse in the Army, with almost half of all complaints of abuse in the Army involving plausible allegations of physical abuse. There is a significant overrepresentation of women who have experienced abuse in the Army, which is concerning given that women made up only 10 per cent of all Army personnel in 2010–2011 – the smallest proportion of any service.

The Taskforce is particularly concerned about the extent and nature of abuse that was carried out in the context of hazing or initiation by groups of senior peers at the Army Apprentice School at Balcombe. Complaints of abuse at the Army Apprentice School between the 1960s and 1980s involved a spate of alarmingly innovative and unique practices of physical abuse particular to this one Defence establishment, including ‘hot and cold iron’, ‘human 10 pins’ and ‘evacuate’.

(iv) Air Force

Of the three services, the lowest number of complaints related to abuse occurring in the Air Force. Cases relating to abuse in the Air Force account for 18 per cent of all cases of abuse that occurred in the Navy, Army or Air Force; however, Air Force personnel have historically accounted for approximately 25 per cent of the ADF Permanent Forces. Based on complaints received, it appears that rates of abuse increased over time and peaked in the 1980s as the worst decade of abuse within the Air Force. However, the Taskforce is particularly concerned that rates of abuse within the Air Force have remained high since that period. This includes a significant number of complaints relating to abuse that has occurred in recent years – 24 per cent of all Air Force cases involved abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011. From complaints received by the Taskforce, it appears that there are high levels of harassment and bullying in the Air Force carried out by direct supervisors, training instructors or individuals in considerable positions of authority. This often involves deliberate and malicious attempts to belittle, ostracise, isolate and undermine complainants, as well as attempts to sabotage or prevent a complainant’s career progression and advancement in the service.
The Air Force is also the service with the highest overrepresentation of women who have experienced abuse – of complaints received by the Taskforce, women were the subjects of abuse in 37 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Air Force, even though women comprised only 17 per cent of all Air Force personnel in 2010–2011. This is considerably higher than the 25 per cent of cases where women were the subjects of abuse in the Army, and 18 per cent of cases in the Navy. The Taskforce is concerned about the high number of complaints relating to sexual abuse and sexual harassment experienced by women in the Air Force, especially in recent years.

(v) Australian Public Service

The Taskforce received a number of complaints involving abuse experienced by Australian Public Service (APS) staff employed in Defence. Though these comprised a small proportion of the total number of cases assessed by the Taskforce, complaints of abuse within the APS are of particular concern given the nature of the abuse and that it has occurred in recent years. Almost all cases of abuse in the APS involve abuse that has taken place between 2000 and 2011, and a number of alleged abusers in these cases are still currently employed in Defence. Most complaints of abuse in the APS involved ongoing and often malicious forms of harassment and bullying carried out by individuals in positions of seniority. This behaviour is typically aimed at undermining or sabotaging complainants in the workplace, with often devastating impacts on their career progression within the service.

(b) Patterns of abuse in Defence

The Taskforce has found that there are distinct patterns of abuse across the Navy, Army and Air Force. Primarily, the Taskforce has found that there are trends evident across Defence in each of the four categories of abuse, described below.

Of note is that some very specific abusive practices are reported to have occurred across all services, sometimes appearing in different services at different times. For example, bed tipping is a practice common to all services; and some form of forced washing is evident across services: ‘scrubbing’ was very common for periods of time in the Navy, forms of scrubbing occurred in the Army, and ‘grot baths’ or ‘chemical baths’ took place at some Air Force establishments. Some abusive practices also appear to have evolved over time, for example running the gauntlet which was very common in Navy recruit and employment training establishments in earlier decades may have evolved into ‘thonging’ in the Navy during the 2000s.

The nature of abuse often depended on the specific circumstances or environment, as well as the technology available. For example, the proximity of water increased water-based forms of abuse, including ‘ponding’ (being regularly thrown into a pond), and ‘dock parties’ (throwing a person off a dock into water, together with other forms of abuse). The wearing of overalls in the uniform of the Air Force was conducive to ‘sprog washing’ (taping up of the uniform before it was forced over a fire hydrant and filled with water) as well as ‘crucifixion’ (having a broom handle inserted in the clothes and strung up between rafters or similar). ‘Woofering’ emerged as a practice only when vacuum cleaners became commercially available, while the recording and distribution of persons in a state of undress has become more common in reports of abuse as technology has become more sophisticated.

Complaints to the Taskforce have also revealed that there are some specific ways in which abuse appears to have perpetuated within Defence and extended through time.

Some complainants told the Taskforce that they had heard of abuse occurring within Defence – including some quite specific practices, such as scrubbing or running the gauntlet in the Navy – from family members who had been in that service. Many complainants told the Taskforce that more senior serving members, specifically staff in recruit and employment training establishments, tacitly accepted the occurrence of abuse, often noting ‘that is the way that it is’ in the specific service. The Taskforce believes that these features of abuse are indicative of a culture which permits or enables abusive practices to continue from one generation to another.
Complaints to the Taskforce also revealed that abuse is perpetuated through the manner in which abusive behaviours are ‘learned’ by those who have been subjected to abuse. This was a particular feature of complaints regarding abuse that occurred within recruit and employment training establishments. Many complainants reported that after being subjected to abuse, they went on to abuse others. Some complainants reported that they were coerced into carrying out abuse, while some others openly stated that they ‘gave as good as they got’. In addition, the Taskforce is aware of a number of cases where complainants to the Taskforce are also named as alleged abusers in other complaints. This demonstrates in part the very harmful and lasting impact of abuse, in that people who have experienced abuse may go on to abuse others.

Finally, the Taskforce also found that in some cases, abuse of specific individuals was perpetuated across locations and sometimes across services. For example, in some cases, rumours or reports about particular individuals would follow them from one Defence establishment to another, and the abusive behaviour would continue. This phenomenon appears to have become more prevalent and more sophisticated with improvements in information technology in recent years.

The sections below provide an overview of the broad trends in each of the four main categories of abuse.

(i) Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse was experienced in 38 per cent of all cases of abuse reported to the Taskforce, with the highest number of complaints relating to sexual abuse that occurred in Defence during the 1970s. It is clear from complaints to the Taskforce that a number of practices of sexual abuse emerged across all three services over similar time periods, including sexual abuse that occurred in the Navy during the 1960s and 1970s, the Army during the 1970s and 1980s, and between the 1960s and 1980s in the Air Force.

Based on complaints received, sexual abuse in earlier decades was more likely to involve degrading and humiliating acts experienced by young boys and carried out by groups of their peers, often in the context of initiation or hazing practices during initial recruit and employment training. This included forced stripping and nakedness, the application of grease or boot polish to the genitals, forced masturbation or being masturbated in front of and ejaculated on, and anal penetration with objects including brooms and mop handles. A significant number of young people under 18 years of age also experienced sexual abuse carried out by individual alleged abusers involving serious incidents of sexual assault during both initial recruit and employment training, and after entry into regular service.

Incidents of sexual abuse in more recent decades have typically involved a single alleged abuser, either a peer or a person of higher rank who, in many cases, was in a position of considerable authority over the complainant at the time of the abuse. Women are overrepresented as the subjects of sexual abuse in more recent decades, particularly during the 1990s and 2000s. Cases of sexual abuse of both male and female complainants during the 2000s include some particularly violent incidents of sexual assault in the form of anal and vaginal penetration, digital penetration and forced oral sex, as well as indecent assault in the form of forced masturbation, and some cases where complainants were filmed or recorded without their consent while in a state of undress.

(ii) Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment was the least commonly reported form of abuse across all services, experienced in 17 per cent of all cases of abuse in Defence. However, complaints of sexual harassment increased over time and have remained consistently high since the 1980s. Furthermore, this type of abuse is likely to have been much more prevalent than is indicated by the statistics, as complaints of sexual abuse may have included behaviour that could also have been categorised as sexual harassment. Sexual harassment was the only type of abuse which, in total numbers, was experienced by more female complainants than men. Almost half the number of cases where women were the subjects of abuse included sexual harassment, compared to only nine per cent of cases involving male complainants. The forms of sexual harassment experienced by complainants were similar during both initial training and regular service, and many forms of sexual harassment were experienced by both men and women alike. This included unwelcome touching, exposure to pornographic material, being exposed to another person’s genitals, being groped or licked, being subjected to sexual innuendo, and repeated unwanted requests to engage in sexual activity.
Based on complaints received, the forms of sexual harassment experienced by women in recent years appear to be more personal and targeted, and in many ways less overt than the types of sexual harassment exhibited during the 1970s and 1980s (and in some cases, early 1990s) when women initially entered the services. Though the nature of the harassment may have changed, female complainants across all time periods have commonly reported being subjected to an ongoing, unwelcome attitude towards women serving in Defence, and the existence of a culture in Defence in which women’s participation is denigrated and women are sexually objectified.

(iii) Physical abuse

Almost half the total number of complaints received by the Taskforce involved incidents of physical abuse (experienced in 48 per cent of all cases). This included similar numbers of cases of physical abuse in the Navy and the Army, though most cases of physical abuse during the 1960s and 1970s occurred in the Navy, and most physical abuse that has occurred in recent decades has taken place in the Army. In most cases of physical abuse, men were the subjects of abuse (89 per cent of physical abuse cases).

There appears to have been a culture of violent initiation or hazing in initial recruit and employment training across decades and across the services, such as running the gauntlet, bed tipping and blanket bashing, as well as scrubbing with hard-bristled brushes. Some of these forms of physical abuse were administered as punishment following informal ‘kangaroo courts’ convened by groups of peers undertaking training from more senior intakes. Other forms of physical abuse occurred in the context of harsh training exercises and practices administered by members of staff which went beyond what was reasonable, particularly for young people. The high level of physical abuse commonly carried out in the context of hazing or initiation in earlier decades is not apparent in complaints of abuse in initial recruit and employment training across the services in recent decades.

The prevalence of physical abuse during regular service suggests the existence of a culture encouraging the use of physical violence. In complaints received by the Taskforce, physical violence appears to have been considered a way of resolving minor disputes, and there is a high incidence of physical assault by peers, as well as assault with the purpose of reinforcing positions of authority, dominance and control. The Taskforce has also received a number of complaints of abuse in the context of initiation ceremonies and rituals upon entry into regular service. In these situations, complainants are coerced into participating in activities – cloaked in the idea of being ‘fun’ and part of a ‘tradition’ within the service – but actually involving particularly violent acts of physical abuse and sometimes sexual abuse.

Many complainants also experienced physical abuse related to illness and injury, including being physically reprimanded or assaulted by superior officers during a period of recovery (sometimes in sick bay), as well as the disregard of medical restrictions and cases involving a denial of medical assistance resulting in further physical injury. This form of physical abuse is especially prevalent in complaints of abuse across all services in recent decades.

(iv) Harassment and bullying

Harassment and bullying was the most commonly reported form of abuse, experienced in 66 per cent of all cases, and having occurred fairly consistently across the entire time period considered by the Taskforce. As a type of abuse, harassment and bullying was experienced by fairly equal numbers of complainants in all services, suggesting the existence of a culture across Defence which encourages or permits certain negative behaviours. In the Navy, most cases of harassment and bullying occurred between the 1960s and 1970s, while in both the Army and Air Force this type of abuse peaked during the 1980s. Rates of harassment and bullying have remained high in all services throughout recent decades. However, it appears that the nature of harassment and bullying, both by peers and superiors, has changed over time.

Harassment and bullying experienced during initial recruit and employment training typically occurred in the context of an informal hierarchy in which newer intakes of students were systematically victimised by those undertaking training from more senior intakes. The types of harassment and bullying carried out in initial training were often more overt in situations where the hazing or initiation practices were condoned by staff, and where young members of Defence were left largely unsupervised and to their own devices. Abuse often took the form of unreasonable tasking and humiliating demands by
peers who were in positions of official and unofficial authority, designed to reinforce the hierarchy and humiliate more junior intakes. It also took the form of the destruction of personal property in an effort to cause reprimand or result in disciplinary action. In these cases, harassment and bullying was experienced mostly indiscriminately by virtue of a complainant’s lower rank and position.

A number of complainants also described being targeted for abuse on account of personal characteristics which set them out from their training cohort, including being younger in age or less physically developed than their peers. Complainants who experienced harassment and bullying during regular service commonly reported being targeted for abuse based on perceived difference, including gender, age, race, workplace performance, sexuality or perceived sexuality, physical limitations and illness and injury.

In earlier accounts of harassment and bullying, the abuse appears to have been more overt in nature, such as directly yelling at or otherwise belittling or humiliating the complainant. While these behaviours are still prevalent today, equally common are more covert forms of harassment and bullying, including ostracising and isolating a complainant, sabotaging of personal equipment, as well as deliberate efforts by superiors to restrict a complainant’s career advancement. Harassment and bullying on the basis of an individual’s race or ethnicity has been and continues to be common in Defence, however the race or ethnicity of individuals targeted for abuse has changed over time, in some cases reflecting broader societal and community attitudes towards particular races and ethnicities.

(c) Key issues of concern to the Taskforce

(i) Abuse of young people in the early stages of their careers

The Taskforce assessed a large number of cases that involved widespread and serious acts of sexual abuse, physical abuse, harassment and bullying and, to a lesser extent, sexual harassment, experienced while complainants were undertaking initial recruit and employment training upon entry into Defence, or upon their entry into regular service. The Taskforce is particularly concerned about the high number of complaints relating to the abuse of children and young persons, with 62 per cent of complainants having been 21 years of age or under at the time of the abuse, including 27 per cent of complainants who were under 18 years of age at the time of the abuse.

Abuse was prevalent in situations where individuals were especially junior in rank – often in their first job, or employed at the bottom of the Defence hierarchy – and susceptible to abuse from older and more highly ranked peers. Many individuals were especially vulnerable to abuse by virtue of having been out of their home environments for the first time, and often in circumstances involving their first experiences with alcohol.

Clear patterns of abuse are evident in initial recruit and employment training establishments across all three services. This includes abuse in the Navy and Air Force during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, and in the Army between the 1960s and 1990s. These reports of abuse are particularly disturbing given that both the victims of such abuse and those responsible for carrying out much of the abuse were generally young boys aged between 15 and 18 years of age at the time of the abuse, and some of whom were as young as 13 and 14 years old. As discussed earlier, from the complaints received by the Taskforce, it appears that abuse was typically carried out by fellow peers within the context of an informal hierarchy in which newer intakes were victimised by those undertaking training from previous, and thereby more ‘senior’, intakes. The extent of these hierarchies varied between training establishments, depending on the length of time individuals spent in training.

Complainants told the Taskforce of experiencing repeated and ongoing campaigns of abuse carried out by senior peers. Abuse thrived in circumstances in which young boys were left largely unsupervised after-hours, and where senior peers assumed certain disciplinary responsibilities and actual or apprehended authority over newer intakes, as well as the right to exercise additional privileges. This included access to and consequent abuse of alcohol.

In this context, complainants typically experienced serious and repeated acts of violence, including indiscriminate physical assaults, being locked inside small spaces for hours at a time, suspended out of windows, having their beds tipped over during the night, and being bashed by groups of people while sleeping. Many complainants reported having
sustained serious injuries that required medical assistance or hospitalisation. Complainants told the Taskforce of being forced to perform humiliating and unreasonable acts and tasks at the behest of senior peers, as well as having to endure particularly degrading forms of abuse. This included being routinely stripped naked, having their genitals scrubbed with hard-bristled brushes or covered in grease or boot polish, being forced to masturbate in public or being forcibly masturbated by others or ejaculated on, and incidents of sexual assault where they were anally penetrated with various implements. These forms of abuse were typically carried out and witnessed by large groups of their peers, adding to the humiliation of complainants and creating an environment of fear that anyone could be the next to be targeted.

It is particularly concerning that frequently members of Defence in a supervisory role adopted an attitude which fostered many of these types of abuse, and which discouraged the reporting of abuse. Complaints received by the Taskforce suggest that these hazing or initiation practices upon entry into Defence were implicitly condoned as part of a ‘tradition’ and approved culture in Defence. In some cases, the abuse that occurred was directly or explicitly encouraged by members of training staff as a means of character building and developing a stronger, more robust force. The reality, however, was that the abuse actually subverted the very qualities desired in a member of the armed forces – trust in one’s peers and superiors, loyalty, and commitment to the group. In very many instances, those who were subjected to abuse left the service, resulting in Defence losing someone who could otherwise have made a long and worthwhile contribution in the service of their country.

Complainants often reflected on the physical and psychological trauma of their time in initial recruit and employment training in Defence. Many, especially those who discharged from Defence without completing their initial training, expressed deep feelings of regret at having been effectively denied an opportunity to represent their country through a career of military service. Complainants also expressed feelings of disappointment and disbelief at having been let down by the very people responsible for their care and protection at such a young and vulnerable age.

(ii) Abuse of women in Defence

The Taskforce received a disproportionately large number of complaints regarding abuse experienced by women, painting a disturbing picture of the treatment of women in Defence over the decades. Current figures indicate that women make up only 14 per cent of all personnel in Defence, and historically, this figure has been even lower, in part due to restrictions on women joining particular services in the past. However, women are overrepresented in complaints of abuse across all services in Defence, and especially in more recent decades.

Complaints regarding abuse of women in the Navy, Army, and Air Force suggest the existence of a particularly discriminatory culture and the perpetuation of negative attitudes towards the participation of women in Defence. This was evident in complaints of abuse experienced during the initial years when women were first introduced into the services, and has extended through time. It appears that as the participation of women in Defence has increased over time, so too has the incidence of abuse experienced by women in Defence. Prior to 1990, women were the subjects of abuse in 15 per cent of cases assessed by the Taskforce. Alarmingly, women were the subjects of abuse in 43 per cent of cases assessed by the Taskforce that occurred between 1990 and the Taskforce cut off date of 11 April 2011. Women appear to experience sexual abuse and sexual harassment across the duration of their careers in Defence, both while undertaking initial recruit and employment training, and during regular service in Defence. Though women were overrepresented across all types of abuse considered by the Taskforce, the Taskforce is particularly concerned about the high number of complaints of sexual abuse and sexual harassment experienced by female complainants. Across all three services, women were the subjects of sexual abuse in a very high proportion of cases involving abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011 (74 per cent of Navy cases, 88 per cent of Army cases, and 82 per cent of Air Force cases), and similarly in cases of sexual harassment (72 per cent of Navy cases, 88 per cent of Army cases, and 88 per cent of Air Force cases).

It appears to be the case that sexual abuse which has occurred in Defence in recent decades has been experienced almost entirely by women. This includes serious acts of sexual assault by members of superior rank to the complainant, in circumstances in which alleged abusers deliberately used their positions of authority as a means of intimidation and to coerce female complainants into performing sexual acts. Other complainants experienced particularly violent incidents of sexual assault by their peers and co-workers. For example, this included sexual assault by multiple alleged abusers,
during which complainants were vaginally and orally penetrated at the same time, as well as incidents where alleged abusers took turns sexually assaulting the complainant. A number of female complainants were sexually assaulted when they were especially vulnerable after having consumed large amounts of alcohol. Other complainants experienced indecent assault in the form of being repeatedly groped on the breasts and buttocks, or filmed or recorded without their consent while in a state of undress. Many complainants told the Taskforce of the feelings of shame, guilt, and betrayal of being subjected to sexual abuse during their careers in Defence.

The Taskforce is also concerned about the high numbers of complaints of sexual harassment of women in Defence. It is particularly noteworthy that the abuse of women in more recent decades appears to be more personal and targeted, and in many ways less overt than the forms of sexual harassment exhibited during the 1970s and 1980s when women initially entered the services. This included, for example, having males expose their genitals and make crude gestures of a sexual nature, as well as being exposed to degrading material of a pornographic nature. By contrast, many complaints of sexual harassment in recent years have involved the denial or restriction of maternity leave, deliberate attempts by male peers to undermine the authority or managerial decisions of high ranking women in Defence, and negative attitudes towards family or caring responsibilities, including by other women. Other female complainants described repeated propositions for sex by their male colleagues, being subjected to intrusive questions about their sexual activity, having malicious rumours spread about their sexual reputation, and having superiors make propositions for sexual favours in return for career advancement. On the whole, female complainants expressed their frustration and disappointment at having their contribution to Defence demeaned and discounted simply on account of their gender.

(iii) Abuse in recent years

It is clear from complaints of abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011 that levels of abuse remain high in the Navy, Army and Air Force. Most abuse reported to have occurred between 2000 and 2011 took place when complainants were engaged in regular service, and the Taskforce received relatively fewer complaints of abuse experienced during initial recruit and employment training during this time period.

It is particularly noteworthy that abuse during this time period was experienced by almost equal numbers of male and female complainants. Women are overrepresented in complaints of abuse given that women comprise only a small proportion of all Defence personnel. This was particularly evident in cases of sexual abuse and sexual harassment. Most complaints of abuse during initial recruit and employment training between 2000 and 2011 involved the sexual abuse of young women.

In most complaints of abuse during recent years, abuse was carried out by persons of higher rank. This includes reports from multiple complainants within each service of abuse they experienced at the hands of the same alleged abuser who had developed a reputation for abuse within that service. Similarly to previous decades, most abusers during this time period were male. However, the Taskforce received some complaints involving abuse carried out by both male and female alleged abusers, and a small number of complaints involving abuse where the main alleged abuser was female.

There were some differences in the most prevalent types of abuse within each of the services as reported by complainants; including a high incidence of sexual abuse and sexual harassment in the Navy, high rates of physical abuse in the Army, and high rates of harassment and bullying in both the Air Force and the Army. For the most part, abuse during recent years has been more covert, private, and insidious in nature as compared to the forms of abuse commonly exhibited and experienced by complainants in earlier decades.

As discussed earlier, women were the principal subjects of sexual abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011, often in circumstances involving the consumption of alcohol. Similarly, most cases of sexual harassment were experienced by female complainants, often endured over the duration of their careers, and in many cases was exacerbated after it became known that a complainant had made a formal report of sexual abuse to Defence.

Other complainants, including a large number of male complainants, told the Taskforce of being subjected to all manner of physically abusive behaviour, including being spat on, ‘king hit’, held up against walls by the throat, as well as repeated
and serious threats of violence including death threats. A number of male complainants also reported being forced to participate in initiation rituals upon their entry into regular service, which often involved elements of physical abuse and sexual abuse. Many complainants of both genders experienced physical abuse in the form of forced participation in activity while ill or injured; or against medical advice.

Similarly to previous decades, harassment and bullying was the most common form of abuse experienced across all three services during this time period. Complainants of both genders commonly experienced verbal abuse and personal attacks to their character and reputation, acts of intimidation, and deliberate attempts to undermine, sabotage or halt their career advancement, as well as acts intended to ostracise complainants in the workplace. The use of technology is also a particular feature of abuse in recent years, in many ways making the abuse more insidious in nature and more likely to occur outside of work hours. This includes harassment and bullying via email, Facebook, or other forms of social media. Many complainants who experienced abuse in recent years told the Taskforce of feeling isolated, having their confidence shattered, and feelings of anger and resentment at the impact this abuse has had on their careers in Defence.

(d) Key factors contributing to abuse in Defence

Analysis of the complaints made to the Taskforce has revealed a number of key factors of abuse that occurred in Defence. Further analysis and research could be conducted with the Taskforce data available about these and other factors contributing to the occurrence of abuse in Defence, in order to inform the development of strategies aimed at preventing abuse from occurring in the future.

(i) Influence of hierarchy and authority

It appears that abuse was very often carried out by members of Defence in positions of actual or perceived authority over complainants at the time of the abuse. Defence is a fundamentally hierarchical institution, within which all members are governed by their rank. In many instances, abuse has flourished in an environment where members could be charged with insubordination or subjected to formal disciplinary action for failing to follow orders or participate in certain activities or forms of abuse directed by persons in positions of authority. The power dynamic between complainants and their alleged abusers is particularly evident in the narratives of abuse experienced by many complainants during the early stages of their careers in Defence. Abuse was carried out by people in positions of authority in both initial recruit and employment training establishments, as well as during regular service. This included abuse carried out not only by immediate supervisors but also members of higher rank, and in some cases, members of the service of especially high rank who commanded high levels of authority and respect. This is particularly evident in complaints of abuse in recent decades, including a number of cases of sexual abuse.

It is important to note that hierarchies within the services operated in both an official and unofficial capacity. In the context of initial recruit and employment training, peers from more senior intakes were often tasked with supervisory roles or given formal positions of authority, and assumed certain disciplinary functions over newer intakes. In these cases, the same individuals tasked with the care and protection of newer and younger intakes were the very people responsible for carrying out much of the serious and widespread abuse that occurred. For example, this was particularly common at HMAS Leeuwin between the 1960s and 1980s, the Army Apprentice School at Balcombe between the 1960s and 1980s, and in the Apprentice Scheme at the RAAF School of Technical Training located at RAAF Base Wagga during the 1980s.

The ingrained nature of both formal and unofficial hierarchies had the further impact of restricting or removing the ability of complainants to report abuse through their chain of command.

(ii) Physical environment

The physical aspects of many Defence environments appear to have had a role in contributing to abuse in Defence. This is particularly evident where individuals were living and working on bases, ships, or while on deployment, and were therefore often unable to remove themselves, at least immediately, from the environment of abuse.
In the high stress environment of serving on deployment, both the risk of abuse is potentially higher and the ability to report abuse is impeded as complainants are typically isolated, separated from social and familial ties of support, and increasingly reliant on the chain of command. Similarly, the isolation of particular bases and relatively tight-knit communities which form within smaller units on these bases has proved problematic for the reporting of abuse, as has the absence of a strong civilian police presence in these areas, further limiting the avenues available for monitoring the behaviour of service personnel.

The lack of adequate supervision of young people emerged as a common feature in complaints of abuse, particularly in complaints of abuse that occurred during initial recruit and employment training. Most of these serious acts of abuse took place in residential accommodation environments outside of regular training hours. Though many complainants told the Taskforce that a duty officer was usually a resident in these accommodation blocks, complainants also made it clear that individuals undertaking training were usually left unsupervised and to their own devices. Many complainants reported that members of staff and duty officers deliberately turned a ‘blind eye’ to the abuse that occurred.

The incidence of abuse that occurred outside of working hours in accommodation environments on base, private residences off base, or during social and work functions, continued to be high in recent decades in both complaints of abuse during initial training and regular service.

(iii) Institutional culture that did not support the reporting of abuse

Complaints to the Taskforce have demonstrated that the overwhelming message within Defence was not to report the abuse. Complainants told the Taskforce that their own experience, or the treatment of others that they witnessed or heard about, reinforced an understanding that reporting was either ‘pointless’, or that repercussions for reporting abuse were often particularly severe.

Complainants frequently spoke of the expectation not to appear weak and a culture requiring that members sort out their problems amongst themselves. This included a strong attitude within Defence that you should not ‘dob on your mates’. Negative repercussions from reporting abuse included being ostracised from their cohort as well as the risk of being subjected to further abuse. As a consequence, complainants were implicitly encouraged to remain silent or to withdraw a report of abuse. In many cases, complainants were actively threatened against reporting abuse.

Many complainants expressed a strong belief that members of senior rank and Defence more generally were aware of the abuse, particularly within initial recruit and employment training establishments, and knowingly took no action to address or prevent it. In addition, many complainants recognised the futility of making a report of abuse in circumstances where Defence often took no action in response to actual reports of abuse. Similarly, complainants were directly exposed to the risks of making a report of abuse in cases where Defence took inappropriate or inadequate action in response to reports of abuse. These included a lack of confidentiality where information regarding the complainant’s report of abuse was subsequently made known on base and thereby increased their risk of further abuse from their peers and colleagues. In some other cases, complainants experienced the termination of their careers in Defence after making a formal report of abuse to Defence, and thereby appeared to have been punished for making a report of abuse, further discouraging others from following their lead.

The effect of an institutional culture that did not support the reporting of abuse was to create an environment which fostered abuse. Abuse flourished within a context in which individuals knew that acts of abuse could go unpunished, and abuse was implicitly condoned by the institution of Defence itself.

(iv) Culture targeting ‘difference’: age, illness and injury, race, religion, and sexuality

Complainants often told the Taskforce that particular factors which marked them out as ‘different’ within their training cohort or among their colleagues increased their risk of being targeted for abuse. It appears that much of this abuse stemmed from the idea that certain characteristics make a suitable member of Defence, as well as a culture of denigrating and isolating those who, for whatever reason, did not fit the particular Defence mould. This included a ‘survival of the fittest’ mentality where only those who were seen as dominant would achieve success and thrive within Defence.
Complainants frequently highlighted that any personal characteristic which was perceived as a sign of weakness or as resulting in poor performance made them more susceptible to abuse by their peers and members more senior in the chain of command. These differences included a complainant’s age: both being particularly young or, in some cases, considerably older and yet of junior rank. Often, a complainant’s perceived physical weakness was based on their slower physical development compared to their peers.

Across all services, complainants experienced abuse on account of any illness or injury which was perceived as having a negative impact on their physical capability. This included common use of the term ‘malingering’, and an attitude where one’s susceptibility towards illness or injury was considered a form of weakness. While the emphasis on physical fitness and ability is understandable in Defence, it must equally be recognised that the inherently physical nature of the work can itself lead to injury or illness. However, complaints received by the Taskforce suggest that this latter understanding has never been and is still not readily accepted within Defence.

Other complainants accounted for abuse based on their race or religious beliefs, or on account of their sexuality or perceived sexuality.

(v) Alcohol and drug use

The misuse of alcohol and other substances has been a common feature of complaints of abuse both in initial recruit and employment training and during regular service. Complainants reported that alcohol consumption was often a factor in cases of physical assault, involving being punched, kicked, or king hit while alleged abusers were intoxicated. Similarly, alcohol often took a prominent place in the narrative of harassment and bullying during hazing or initiation practices, evident in accounts of abuse carried out by senior peers during initial recruit and employment training, and also by more senior-ranked members of Defence in initiation rituals upon a complainant’s entry into regular service.

Alcohol consumption by both complainants and alleged abusers is particularly prominent in cases of sexual abuse, including serious acts of sexual assault and indecent assault. Many complainants reported having been sexually assaulted after social functions, often in circumstances in which they had consumed large amounts of alcohol and were drifting in and out of a state of consciousness. This included some complainants who reported that their drink was spiked prior to the incident of abuse.

Complaints to the Taskforce suggest the existence of an entrenched culture of alcohol abuse, where the consumption of large amounts of alcohol is encouraged as integral and necessary in building camaraderie, shared experiences, and being accepted as a member of the team. This is particularly concerning in the many situations where complainants – many of whom were particularly young and vulnerable in the early stages of their careers – were provided alcohol by their peers or superiors, and felt under considerable pressure to acquiesce out of fear of the potential repercussions of declining an offer by those with whom they would have to work closely, or who held a higher rank.

(e) Issues arising in Defence management of reports of abuse

Complainants have repeatedly told the Taskforce how important it is to them that their complaints of abuse are managed appropriately, and of the very significant impacts on them when their complaints of abuse were mismanaged by Defence. The Taskforce has made a finding of mismanagement by Defence in a very high proportion of complaints.

The Taskforce has found that Defence adequately managed actual reports of abuse in a small number of complaints. In these few complaints, Defence conducted proper investigation and took appropriate administrative or disciplinary action, while supporting complainants during the process. However, on the whole, the Taskforce has found that Defence mismanaged many actual reports of abuse. This is for a number of reasons, including that Defence took no action in response to many reports of abuse, for example, by not believing complainants or by dismissing the abuse as inconsequential or as an aspect of military life. In other cases, it was clear that Defence action was inappropriate or inadequate in response to the report of abuse, for example, when Defence provided little or no support to complainants after making a report of abuse, which often resulted in complainants experiencing further abuse by being required to
work alongside alleged abusers for significant periods of time, or being marginalised and harassed by their peers after it became known that they made a report of abuse.

Of particular concern to the Taskforce is the number of cases where reports were made to either military or civilian police, and where it appears that Defence was unwilling to consider administrative or disciplinary action against alleged abusers while either military or civilian police investigation was under way, even though that option was available to them. The Taskforce acknowledges that relevant policies have been clarified to reinforce that administrative action can be taken in situations where there is concurrent Defence Force Discipline Act or civilian police investigation.

Many complainants told the Taskforce that though they experienced abuse in Defence on one or more occasions, they did not make a formal report of the abuse. Complainants described how the culture within Defence did not support the reporting of abuse, and this was exemplified by the absence of effective reporting mechanisms. Other complainants, like many victims of abuse, told the Taskforce of the feelings of shame and the stigma attached with having been abused, particularly within the Defence environment which considered the reporting of abuse to be a sign of weakness. In many cases of abuse, complainants were also directly threatened against reporting abuse, and incidents of abuse went unreported on account of the perceived risk of being subjected to further abuse, or perceived risk to their career in Defence.

It is also clear to the Taskforce that the nature of the abuse experienced by complainants itself contributed to underreporting. This was especially the case in situations where abuse in the form of hazing or initiation practices was implicitly condoned and in some cases encouraged by members of staff, and equally where abuse was carried out by supervisors or higher-ranking officers in the chain of command. In many cases, the subject of abuse was not able to report the abuse they were experiencing because the person responsible for the abuse was the person to whom they would normally be expected to make a report.

In a large proportion of cases where complainants did not make an actual report of abuse, the Taskforce has nonetheless found that Defence mismanaged a constructive report of abuse. This occurred in situations where:

- there was a pattern or practice of abuse such that Defence plausibly knew or ought to have known about the abuse and failed to stop or prevent it;
- the abuse was effected by a person of seniority or higher rank to the complainant to whom the complainant could have otherwise reported the abuse;
- the abuse was witnessed by a person in Defence in a position of seniority or higher rank but who took no steps to stop or prevent it; and/or
- the complainant presented to a superior or other person in authority with signs of injury as ought reasonably to have given rise to a concern that the complainant was being, or may have been, abused, and they failed to make any reasonable enquiry.

Complaints received by the Taskforce made clear the very significant short-term and long-lasting physical and psychological impacts on complainants in cases where reports of abuse were mismanaged by Defence.

### 15.4 Still serving alleged abusers

The question of how many alleged abusers are still serving within Defence has drawn considerable interest since the beginning of the Taskforce. This is an issue that was raised by DLA Piper, who noted the risk that ‘individuals who perpetrated abuse in the past have not been called to account and/or removed from the ADF, they may constitute an ongoing risk to the people within the ADF and to the ADF itself.’ The risk is couched in terms of the risk that they may re-offend; and also the risk of undermining the credibility and confidence in the ADF if it became known that individuals responsible for abuse who were not held to account now hold middle or senior management positions and have important leadership roles. The DLA Piper Review specifically raises this concern in relation to abuse alleged to have occurred at ADFA in the 1990s, which is discussed in detail in the Taskforce Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy.
The Taskforce agrees that it is important that steps are taken to hold still serving alleged abusers, or those who have been found to have mishandled reports of abuse, to account for their conduct where this has not happened in the past. The Taskforce further agrees that still serving alleged abusers may pose risks to both individuals within Defence and to Defence as a whole. It is for this reason, as noted in Part B of this report, the Chair considers that he has an obligation to report to the CDF instances where a current ADF serving member – in either the Permanent or Reserve Forces – has an allegation of abuse made against them and they potentially pose a risk to other ADF members. This process is discussed in further detail in section 9.5 of this report.

As part of the assessment process, a Request for Information is made in relation to each named alleged abuser in order to ascertain whether they are still serving in Defence. Consequently, the Taskforce has gathered information about the number of alleged abusers who are still serving in Defence.

As at October 2014, the following numbers of alleged abusers are still serving in Defence:

- Permanent Forces and APS employees in Defence – 594 individuals; and
- Active Reserve – 204 individuals.

In addition, there are 341 alleged abusers who are currently in the Inactive Reserve.

In order to provide statistics about the exact number of individuals still serving in Defence who are allegedly responsible for specific incidents of abuse, a manual review of the Taskforce’s information holdings is necessary. The Taskforce has conducted this review for members of the Permanent Forces and the Active Reserve who are allegedly responsible for acts of sexual abuse and serious physical abuse reported in complaints made to the Taskforce (as at September 2014):

- Permanent Forces and APS employees in Defence – 92 individuals, comprising:
  - sexual abuse – 70 individuals; and
  - serious physical abuse – 30 individuals.
- Active Reserve – 44 individuals (including one individual who has transferred to the Inactive/Standby Reserve but is currently undertaking active service), comprising:
  - sexual abuse – 24 individuals; and
  - serious physical abuse – 22 individuals.

In addition, the Taskforce is aware of an additional eight individuals, not included in the figures above, who are alleged to have been responsible for sexual abuse or serious physical abuse at ADFA in the 1990s.

As at 27 October 2014, the Taskforce had referred 40 cases to the CDF for his consideration of possible administrative or disciplinary action (including 17 cases referred to the CDF in the ‘ADFA 24’ Case Summary Analyses provided on 16 October 2013 and 8 September 2014). These 40 cases include 64 alleged abusers identified as still serving in Defence at the time of the assessment. The breakdown for where these individuals were serving at the time of assessment was:

- Permanent Forces (including Department of Defence): 38;
- Active Reserves: 11; and
- Standby/Inactive Reserves: 15.

A further 27 matters involving 29 alleged abusers have been assessed as requiring no further action.

It is important to note that this data will change as the Taskforce completes its work. In addition, a person’s service status may change over time, either because they have discharged, or because they have moved in or out of the Inactive Reserve.
15.5 Statistical overview of complaints

(a) Overview

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 2224 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse (relating to more than 1650 complainants). It is important to note that at the time that this analysis was compiled, the work of the Taskforce was not complete. The statistics provided in this report will necessarily change when the Taskforce analysis of all complaints is finalised. However, as the discussion below will demonstrate, the Taskforce is sufficiently progressed in its work to present with some confidence a picture of the trends in abuse reported to have occurred in Defence.

It is also important to note that the Taskforce has categorised the abuse experienced by each complainant as forming one or more ‘cases’ of abuse. One case generally relates to abuse experienced at one location (occasionally abuse experienced over a number of locations may be classed as one case of abuse if it is part of an ongoing campaign of abuse). Complainants may have experienced more than one case of abuse during their time in Defence. The analysis in this statistical overview of complaints relates to cases of abuse as this is the level at which most of the relevant data is captured. For this reason, the number of cases of abuse is greater than the total number of complaints of abuse. In addition, each case of abuse may include a number of different categories of abuse. For this reason the total number of types of abuse is greater than both the total number of complaints and the total number of cases.

The cases on which this analysis is based relate to abuse that occurred between 1942 (the year of the earliest complaint made to the Taskforce) and the Taskforce cut-off date of 11 April 2011:

- 1940s – one case (0.04 per cent of all cases);
- 1950s – 35 cases (two per cent of all cases);
- 1960s – 345 cases (16 per cent of all cases);
- 1970s – 453 cases (20 per cent of all cases);
- 1980s – 510 cases (23 per cent of all cases);
- 1990s – 400 cases (18 per cent of all cases);
- 2000s – 407 cases (18 per cent of all cases);
- 2010–11 – 69 cases (three per cent of all cases); and
- Date unknown – four cases (0.2 per cent of all cases).

Reports of abuse were received across all three services, as well as ADFA and APS employees in Defence:

- Navy – 861 cases (39 per cent of all cases);
- Army – 879 cases (40 per cent of all cases);
- Air Force – 378 cases (17 per cent of all cases);
- ADFA – 50 cases (two per cent of all cases); and
- APS – 56 cases (three per cent of all cases). *

The abuse reported was experienced by men in a significant majority of cases:

- Abuse experienced by men – 1647 cases (74 per cent of all cases); and
- Abuse experienced by women – 577 cases (26 per cent of all cases).
For the purposes of the Taskforce, abuse includes sexual abuse, sexual harassment, physical abuse and harassment and bullying. Many complainants experienced more than one type of abuse during their careers in Defence. Specific categories of abuse were reported as follows:

- Sexual abuse – 834 cases (38 per cent of all cases);
- Sexual harassment – 389 cases (17 per cent of all cases);
- Physical abuse – 1067 cases (48 per cent of all cases); and
- Harassment and bullying – 1464 cases (66 per cent of all cases).

(b) Abuse by decade

As noted above, the Taskforce has received complaints about abuse that occurred between 1942 and 11 April 2011. As at September 2014, the greatest number of cases related to abuse that occurred during the 1980s (510 cases), followed by the 1970s (453 cases), and the 2000s (407 cases), as shown in the graph below.

Graph 1: Total cases by decade

The decades in which the greatest number of cases of abuse occurred varied across the services. In the 1960s and 1970s, the greatest number of cases involved abuse of people serving in the Navy. In the 1980s, 1990s and between 2000 and 2011, the greatest number of cases involved abuse of people serving in the Army. Cases relating to abuse of people serving in the Air Force were the least numerous of the three services in every decade.

Abuse occurring in the Navy peaked in the 1970s (233 cases), while abuse in the Army and Air Force peaked in the 1980s (238 cases and 113 cases respectively).
Graph 2: Cases by service over time

Graph 3: Cases by service over time

Table 1: Cases by service and decade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>861</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>879</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>378</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(c) Abuse by service

As noted above, as at September 2014, the highest number of cases related to abuse that occurred in the Army (879 cases), followed by abuse in the Navy (861 cases), and abuse in the Air Force (378 cases).

Graph 4: Number of cases relating to each service

The Navy was overrepresented in terms of total number of cases, compared to the Army and the Air Force. In the current ADF Permanent Forces, there are approximately twice as many Army personnel as there are Navy personnel or Air Force personnel. In 2011-2012, for example, the average funded strength of the Army Permanent Force was 29,697 personnel, while the Navy comprised 14,054, and the Air Force comprised 14,243. Since the 1990s, Army personnel have made up around 50 per cent of the ADF Permanent Forces while Navy personnel have made up 25 per cent and Air Force personnel have made up the remaining 25 per cent. The Army has also generally held much higher numbers of Reservists than the Navy or the Air Force. In 2011-12, for example, there were 17,251 Army Reservists, compared to 2,001 Navy Reservists and 2,820 Air Force Reservists.

Despite there having been significantly more Army personnel than Navy personnel in the ADF across the time period considered by the Taskforce, similar numbers of cases of abuse involved Navy personnel as involved Army personnel. Similarly, more than twice as many cases involved Navy personnel as involved Air Force personnel:

- cases relating to abuse in the Navy account for 39 per cent of all cases of abuse (861 cases);
- cases relating to abuse in the Army account for 40 per cent of all cases (879 cases); and
- cases relating to abuse in the Air Force account for 17 per cent of cases (378).

(d) Abuse by sex of the complainant

As at September 2014, men were the complainants in 74 per cent of all cases (1,647 of 2,224 cases) and women were the complainants in 26 per cent of cases (577 of 2,224 cases).

Despite the higher number of men who experienced abuse than women, women were significantly overrepresented as complainants. This is because at the end of 2010-2011, women comprised 14 per cent of all ADF personnel and in the decades before this, women comprised even less. The overrepresentation of women as complainants was particularly evident in cases of abuse that occurred between 1990 and 2011, as shown in the graph below. Over this period in particular, women were the complainants in 43 per cent of cases (374 of 876 cases), while men were the complainants in 57 per cent of cases (502 of 876 cases).
The largest number of cases where women experienced abuse related to the Army (224 cases), followed by the Navy (151 cases), then the Air Force (141 cases). The proportion of female to male complainants was highest, however, among cases relating to abuse within the Air Force:

- women were the complainants in 18 per cent of cases relating to abuse in the Navy over the whole time period, while men were the complainants in 82 per cent of cases (in 2010–2011, women made up 19 per cent of Navy personnel\(^1\));
- women were the complainants in 25 per cent of cases relating to abuse in the Army, while men were the complainants in 75 per cent of cases (in 2010–2011, women made up 10 per cent of Army personnel\(^1\)); and
- women were the complainants in 37 per cent of cases relating to abuse in the Air Force, while men were the complainants in 63 per cent of cases (in 2010–2011, women made up 17 per cent of Air Force personnel\(^1\)).
For abuse that occurred between 1990 and 2011, a time period when more women were serving in the ADF, the percentages of women who experienced abuse compared to men were much higher. Women were the complainants in 43 per cent of cases of abuse that occurred between 1990 and 2011; while men were the complainants in 57 per cent of cases. The percentages of women who experienced abuse compared to men were also more similar across the services between 1990 and 2011 than over the rest of the time period considered by the Taskforce. In cases relating to abuse that occurred between 1990 and 2011:

- women were the complainants in 43 per cent of Navy cases, while men were the complainants in 57 per cent of cases;
- women were the complainants in 37 per cent of Army cases, while men were the complainants in 63 per cent of cases; and
- women were the complainants in 46 per cent of Air Force cases, while men were the complainants in 54 per cent of cases.

**Graph 7: Cases by sex of complainant – Abuse occurring in 1990–2011**

(e) **Types of abuse**

As at September 2014, harassment and bullying was the type of abuse most commonly experienced, followed by physical abuse, then sexual abuse, and finally sexual harassment:

- Sexual abuse – 834 cases (38 per cent of all cases);
- Sexual harassment – 389 cases (17 per cent of all cases);
- Physical abuse – 1067 cases (48 per cent of all cases); and
- Harassment and bullying – 1464 cases (66 per cent of all cases).

The types of abuse most commonly experienced by complainants have changed over time. Sexual abuse and physical abuse became less common after the 1980s, while harassment and bullying increased substantially over time compared to other types of abuse.

In cases relating to abuse that occurred during the 1960s, for example, 43 per cent of cases involved sexual abuse, nine per cent involved sexual harassment, 69 per cent involved physical abuse, and 64 per cent involved harassment and bullying.
In cases relating to abuse that occurred in the 1980s, 40 per cent of cases involved sexual abuse, 20 per cent involved sexual harassment, 51 per cent involved physical abuse, and 64 per cent involved harassment and bullying.

In cases relating to abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011, however, 23 per cent of cases involved sexual abuse, 18 per cent involved sexual harassment, 27 per cent involved physical abuse, and 79 per cent involved harassment and bullying.

Graph 8: Cases by type of abuse

Graph 9: Cases by type of abuse by decade
Table 2: Cases by type of abuse by decade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940–49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950–59</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960–69</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>1067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970–79</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>1464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980–89</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>1227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990–99</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000–09</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010–11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all three services, harassment and bullying was the type of abuse most commonly experienced by complainants over the entire time period considered by the Taskforce, followed by physical abuse, sexual abuse, and then sexual harassment, as shown in the graph below. Each type of abuse is discussed further in the subsections below.

Graph 10: Cases by service and type of abuse

The types of abuse experienced by male and female complainants were markedly different. Harassment and bullying was the type of abuse most commonly experienced by both male and female complainants. However, female complainants were much more likely than male complainants to have experienced sexual abuse or sexual harassment, and far less likely to have experienced physical abuse:

- 50 per cent of female complainants experienced sexual abuse (288 cases), compared to 33 per cent of male complainants (546 cases);
- 42 per cent of female complainants experienced sexual harassment (243 cases), compared to nine per cent of male complainants (146 cases);
- 20 per cent of female complainants experienced physical abuse (118 cases), compared to 58 per cent of male complainants (949 cases); and
- 59 per cent of female complainants experienced harassment and bullying (341 cases), compared to 68 per cent of male complainants (1123 cases).
(i) Sexual abuse

A total of 38 per cent of all cases reported to the Taskforce involved sexual abuse (834 out of 2224 cases).

The largest number of cases that involved sexual abuse occurred in the 1970s. The number of cases that involved sexual abuse was fewer in each subsequent decade.

The highest total number of sexual abuse cases involved the Navy, followed by the Army, then Air Force:

- Navy sexual abuse – 379 cases (45 per cent of all sexual abuse cases);
- Army sexual abuse – 287 cases (34 per cent of all sexual abuse cases); and
- Air Force sexual abuse – 130 cases (16 per cent of all sexual abuse cases).
Complainants from the Navy experienced sexual abuse disproportionately to complainants from the Army and Air Force:

- 44 per cent of Navy cases involved sexual abuse;
- 33 per cent of Army cases involved sexual abuse; and
- 34 per cent of Air Force cases involved sexual abuse.

The bulk of cases involving sexual abuse in the Navy related to abuse that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. For abuse occurring after these decades, the number of sexual abuse cases from Navy complainants dropped dramatically. A total of 105 cases of sexual abuse in the Navy related to abuse that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, compared to 213 cases that involved sexual abuse that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s.

Of sexual abuse that occurred during the 1980s and 1990s, the highest number of cases involved the Army. Of cases of sexual abuse occurring between 2000 and 2011, however, abuse of Navy complainants remerged as the most numerous of all the services, accounting for almost half of all sexual abuse cases during this period (47 out of 108 cases).

Graph 13: Sexual abuse cases by service

As noted in section 15.5(d) above, a higher proportion of women experienced sexual abuse than men. Of cases where women were the complainants, 50 per cent involved sexual abuse, compared to 33 per cent of cases where men were the complainants.

The percentages of women who experienced sexual abuse were similar across the services. Of cases where women were the complainants, 53 per cent involved sexual abuse of women in the Navy, compared to 50 per cent of cases involving women in the Army, and 48 per cent of cases involving women in the Air Force. The percentage of male complainants who experienced sexual abuse was highest in the Navy. Of Navy cases where men were the complainants, 42 per cent involved sexual abuse, compared to 27 per cent of Army cases, and 27 per cent of Air Force cases.

(ii) Sexual harassment

A total of 17 per cent of all cases assessed by the Taskforce involved sexual harassment (389 out of 2224 cases).

Sexual harassment cases reached a peaked in the 1980s and 1990s, as shown in the graph below.
Cases relating to abuse in the Navy comprised the highest number of total sexual harassment cases, followed closely by cases relating to the Army, then the Air Force:

- Navy sexual harassment – 147 cases (38 per cent of all sexual harassment cases);
- Army sexual harassment – 135 cases (35 per cent of all sexual harassment cases); and
- Air Force sexual harassment – 81 cases (21 per cent of all sexual harassment cases).

However, as a percentage of all cases relating to each service, complainants from the Air Force were more likely to have experienced sexual harassment than complainants from the Navy or the Army:

- 17 per cent of all Navy cases involved sexual harassment;
- 15 per cent of all Army cases involved sexual harassment; and
- 21 percent of Air Force cases involved sexual harassment.

There was a noticeable spike in sexual harassment cases involving Air Force complainants in the 1980s and in sexual harassment cases involving Army complainants in the 1990s, as shown in the graph below.
Sexual harassment was the only type of abuse which, in total numbers, was experienced by more women than men (243 women, compared to 146 men). Of cases where women were the complainants, 41 per cent involved sexual harassment, compared to nine per cent of cases where men were the complainants.

Both men and women from the Navy were more likely to have experienced sexual harassment than men and women from the other two services. Of cases where women in the Navy were the complainants, 48 per cent involved sexual harassment, compared to 42 per cent of Army cases, and 44 per cent of Air Force cases. Of Navy cases where men were the complainants, 11 per cent involved sexual harassment, compared to six per cent of Army cases, and eight per cent of Air Force cases.

(iii) Physical abuse

Physical abuse was the second most common type of abuse experienced by complainants, with 48 per cent of all cases involved incidents of physical abuse (1067 out of 2224 cases).

The percentage of cases that involved physical abuse decreased in more recent decades. In cases relating to abuse that occurred in the 1960s, for example, 69 per cent of cases involved physical abuse (237 cases). By contrast, in cases relating to abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011, only 27 per cent of cases involved physical abuse (129 cases).

Graph 16: Physical abuse cases by decade

The highest total number of physical abuse cases involved the Navy, followed by the Army, then Air Force:

- Navy physical abuse – 464 cases (43 per cent of all physical abuse cases);
- Army physical abuse – 428 cases (40 per cent of all physical abuse cases); and
- Air Force physical abuse – 144 cases (13 per cent of all physical abuse cases).

Similarly, physical abuse was experienced most frequently by Navy complainants and least frequently by Air Force complainants:

- 54 per cent of Navy cases involved physical abuse;
- 49 per cent of Army cases involved physical abuse; and
- 38 per cent of Air Force cases involved physical abuse.
However, the experiences of physical abuse across the different services varied dramatically over time. While cases involving the Navy made up the bulk of cases relating to physical abuse in the 1960s and 1970s, cases of physical abuse in the Army vastly outnumbered those from the Navy and the Air Force for physical abuse that occurred in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. Between 1980 and 2011, cases involving the Army comprised the greatest number of physical abuse cases, both in terms of total numbers of cases and as a percentage of all cases for each service. This remained the same between 2000 and 2011, during which time 32 per cent of all Army cases involved physical abuse, compared with 22 per cent of Navy cases and 26 per cent of Air Force cases.

![Graph 17: Physical abuse cases by service](image_url)

Physical abuse was experienced overwhelmingly more often by men than by women. Men were the complainants in 89 per cent of physical abuse cases (949 cases) and women were the complainants in 11 per cent of cases (118 cases).

Of all cases where men were the complainants, 58 per cent involved physical abuse. In cases where women were the complainants, 20 per cent involved physical abuse. Men from the Navy experienced physical abuse more often than men from the other two services. Of Navy cases where men were the complainants, 62 per cent involved physical abuse, compared to 58 per cent of Army cases, and 46 per cent of Air Force cases. For women, complainants from the Air Force were more likely to have experienced physical abuse. Of Air Force cases where women were the complainants, 26 percent involved physical abuse, compared to 21 per cent of Army cases and 17 per cent of Navy cases.

(iv) Harassment and bullying

Harassment and bullying was the most commonly experienced type of abuse. A total of 66 per cent of all cases to the Taskforce involved harassment and bullying (1464 out of 2224 cases). Complainants often experienced harassment and bullying in conjunction with other types of abuse.

Cases of harassment and bullying spanned reasonably consistently across the time period between 1960 and 2011, as shown in the graph below.
Cases relating to the Army accounted for the highest number of harassment and bullying cases. This was closely followed by Navy cases, then by Air Force cases:

- Navy harassment and bullying – 539 cases (37 per cent of all harassment and bullying cases);
- Army harassment and bullying – 580 cases (40 per cent of all harassment and bullying cases); and
- Air Force harassment and bullying – 253 cases (17 per cent of all harassment and bullying cases).

Proportionally, harassment and bullying was experienced reasonably equally across all three services:

- 63 per cent of Navy cases involved harassment and bullying;
- 66 per cent of Army cases involved harassment and bullying; and
- 67 per cent of Air Force cases involved harassment and bullying.

For each individual service, however, the numbers of cases of harassment and bullying varied across different decades. For the Navy, there were many more cases relating to harassment and bullying that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, compared to the 1980s onwards. For both the Army and Air Force, however, cases of harassment and bullying peaked in the 1980s, then fell slightly and remained fairly consistent from the 1990s onwards.
Both men and women experienced harassment and bullying more than any other type of abuse. Of cases where men were the complainants, 68 per cent involved harassment and bullying. In cases where women were the complainants, 59 per cent involved harassment and bullying.

For men, harassment and bullying was most pronounced in Air Force and Army cases. Seventy per cent of cases where men from the Air Force were the complainants involved harassment and bullying, as did 69 per cent of Army cases, and 64 per cent of Navy cases. For women, those in the Air Force were more likely to have experienced harassment or bullying than those in the Army or Navy. Sixty-two per cent of cases where women from the Air Force were the complainants involved harassment and bullying, compared to 57 per cent of Army cases, and 56 per cent of Navy cases.

(f) Abuse of children

(i) Number of cases of abuse of children

As at October 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 612 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse where the complainant was under 18 years of age at the time of the abuse (27 per cent of all Taskforce cases). In 16 of these cases, the complainant was under 15 years of age at the time of the abuse.

(ii) Abuse of children by decade

The majority of cases involving abuse of children occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. A large number of cases also occurred in the 1980s, with fewer in the 1990s and 2000s. Fourteen cases involving abuse of children occurred between 2000 and 2011.
(iii) Abuse of children by service

The majority of cases involving abuse of children occurred within the Navy. A total of 59 per cent of complainants who experienced abuse while they were children were in the Navy at the time of the abuse (364 out of 612 cases), 26 per cent were in the Army (159 cases), 12 per cent were in the Air Force (74 cases), and two per cent were cadets at ADFA (15 cases). These percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding of figures.
The top locations where children under 18 years of age experienced abuse were:

- HMAS Leeuwin (Navy) – 208 cases;
- Army Apprentice School, Balcombe and Bonegilla (Army) – 55 cases;
- Army Recruit Training Centre, Kapooka (Army) – 37 cases;
- HMAS Nirimba (Navy) – 37 cases;
- RAAF Base Wagga (Air Force) – 31 cases;
- HMAS Nirimba (Navy) – 37 cases;
- HMAS Sydney III (Navy) – 16 cases;
- ADFA – 15 cases;
- HMAS Melbourne II (Navy) – 13 cases; and
- RAAF Base Edinburgh (Air Force) – 12 cases.

(iv) Types of abuse experienced by children

Complainants who were children at the time of the abuse most commonly experienced physical abuse, followed by harassment and bullying, sexual abuse, and finally sexual harassment. A significantly larger proportion of children than adults experienced sexual abuse and physical abuse. Of complainants who were children at the time of the abuse:

- 51 per cent experienced sexual abuse (310 cases), compared to 38 per cent of all complainants (834 cases);
- 13 per cent experienced sexual harassment (80 cases), compared to 17 per cent of all complainants (389 cases);
- 68 per cent experienced physical abuse (416 cases), compared to 48 per cent of all complainants (1067 cases); and
- 64 per cent experienced harassment and bullying (392 cases), compared to 66 per cent of all complainants (1464 cases).

(v) Sex of complainants

The vast majority of complainants who were children when they experienced abuse were boys. Cases of abuse of boys accounted for 90 per cent of all cases of abuse of children (552 out of 612 cases), and cases of abuse of girls accounted for 10 per cent of all cases of abuse involving children (60 out of 612 cases).
Most of the abuse of boys took place in the 1960s and 1970s. For girls, the majority of cases of abuse occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, when more women had entered the services. Girls made up the majority of children who experienced abuse between 2000 and 2011, as shown in the graph below.

**Graph 23: Cases of abuse of boys and girls by decade**

The types of abuse experienced by boys and girls were significantly different. For girls, the type of abuse most commonly experienced was sexual abuse (37 cases), followed by harassment and bullying (35 cases). For boys, the type of abuse most commonly experienced was physical abuse (399 cases), followed by harassment and bullying (357 cases). However, it is important to note that a very large number of boys also experienced sexual abuse, with the Taskforce having assessed 273 plausible cases of sexual abuse of boys who were under 18 years of age at the time of the abuse.

**Graph 24: Types of abuse experienced by boys and girls**
Abuse of children since 2000

Fourteen cases of abuse of children occurred between 2000 and 2011. Of these cases:

- seven involved sexual abuse;
- four involved sexual harassment;
- six involved physical abuse; and
- nine involved harassment and bullying.

2. These figures include eight individuals who are alleged to be responsible for both sexual abuse and serious physical abuse.
3. These figures include two individuals who are alleged to be responsible for both sexual abuse and serious physical abuse.
4. These percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding of figures.
6. Please note that the size and structure of the ADF has changed over time, particularly during major conflicts. For example, in late 1944, the Air Force increased to 182 000 personnel to operate 6200 aircraft in 61 squadrons. At the same time, the Navy had around 39 650 personnel (or six per cent of the total ADF) and the Army had 423 000 personnel (or 66 per cent of the total ADF): Email from Department of Defence Organisational Response Unit (ORU) to the Taskforce, 20 October 2014.
10. Above.
11. Above.
16. Complaints of abuse in the Royal Australian Navy

16.1 Background to the Navy

(a) Historical background

The Royal Australian Navy (Navy) is the naval branch of the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

The first Australian naval forces were established in the late 1850s in response to fears of a Russian invasion. However, it was not until after Federation in 1901 that the ships and resources of the separate colonial navies were integrated into a national force: the Commonwealth Naval Forces. For nearly a decade, vigorous debate raged about whether Australia would lead its own naval service, or simply finance the stationing of Royal (British) Navy vessels in Australian waters. However, in 1909, a consensus was reached, leading to the birth of the independent Royal Australian Navy on 10 July 1911.

The Navy can be divided into ships and shore establishments, a shore establishment being a naval base on land. However, despite obvious material differences, the two types of locations are substantially very similar. A naval shore establishment is commissioned in the same manner as a sea-going vessel and is known as Her (or His) Majesty’s Australian Ship (HMAS). Furthermore, the personnel at a naval base are organised in the same manner as those aboard ships.

Currently, the Navy has over 53 vessels and 16 shore establishments.

(b) Key establishments

(i) Recruit and employment training establishments

During the past 100 years, there have been four major Navy training establishments: HMAS Leeuwin, HMAS Cerberus, HMAS Nirimba, and HMAS Creswell.

HMAS Leeuwin was a Navy shore base located in Fremantle, Western Australia. Between 1960 and 1984, it functioned as a Junior Recruit Training Establishment, taking in approximately 13,000 boys aged between 15 and 16 years of age at their time of entry. In response to growing concerns regarding costs and staffing issues, the recruitment of boys through the junior recruit entry scheme was suspended in 1984. The final intake of 37 junior recruits graduated on 4 December 1984, and HMAS Leeuwin was decommissioned as a naval base in November 1986. However, it continues to be used as a Defence base, referred to as Leeuwin Barracks.

HMAS Cerberus opened in 1920, and is still in operation as the Navy’s premier training establishment. Located on the Mornington Peninsula, HMAS Cerberus covers over 1500 hectares and has numerous training and recreation facilities. The primary role of this base has always been the training of Navy personnel. However in the last 13 years, this role has been extended to training personnel across all three ADF services – including the Army and Air Force. HMAS Cerberus is the home of the Recruit School and is now, for all sailors, their first contact with life in the Navy. Each year, 6000 personnel are trained at this establishment, averaging 800 trainees at HMAS Cerberus at any one time. Upon graduation from Recruit School, recruits are promoted to Seaman Star and undertake training at their respective category school.

HMAS Nirimba was commissioned on 1 April 1953 as a joint Naval Air Repair Yard and technical training establishment for the Navy’s Fleet Air Arm. It was re-commissioned two years later as the Navy Apprentice Training Establishment. HMAS Nirimba was decommissioned on 25 February 1994, having trained some 13,000 young men and women from the Navy and other Commonwealth Navies.

HMAS Creswell is a shore establishment located in Jervis Bay NSW and is home to the Royal Australian Navy College (RANC). RANC provides initial training for most junior naval officers in the form of a five-month, residential New Entry Officers’ Course. While originally opened in 1915, the location was not commissioned as HMAS Creswell until 1956 after a period of closure prompted by the Great Depression. Since then, HMAS Creswell has expanded its activities,
incorporating the Staff Training School in 1987 (now known as the Advanced Leadership Management Faculty) and the School of Survivability and Ship’s Safety in 1993. Furthermore, since 1998, the Commanding Officer of HMAS Creswell has been lead authority for the conduct and management of the entire Navy’s initial entry, leadership and management training around Australia.

(ii) Shore establishments

The Navy has 16 shore establishments which are located around Australia.

The two main fleet bases which host the bulk of the Navy’s ships and submarines are Fleet Base West at HMAS Stirling near Perth, and Fleet Base East at HMAS Kuttalul in Sydney. Of these two bases, HMAS Stirling is the largest base, employing more than 2300 service personnel, 600 Defence civilians, and 500 long-term contractors.

In addition, three other bases are home to the Navy’s minor war vessels: HMAS Waterhen at Sydney which hosts the Navy’s mine warfare assets, HMAS Coonawarra at Darwin and HMAS Cairns at Cairns which host the Navy’s patrol, survey, and small amphibious vessels.

The remaining shore bases such as HMAS Albatross, HMAS Creswell and HMAS Penguin provide training, maintenance, logistics and administrative support to naval personnel, vessels and aircraft around the country.

(iii) Ships

The Navy consists of 53 vessels, including frigates, submarines, patrol boats and auxiliary ships.

The core strength of the Navy fleet lies in its eight Anzac class frigates, four Adelaide class frigates and six Collins class submarines. In addition to this are a number of landing craft, patrol boats, charting and surveying vessels as well as replenishment ships such as HMAS Sirius and HMAS Success.

The Navy has adopted British Navy naming conventions in its naming of large ships after major Australian cities. The first Navy ships to bear these names were the three World War I cruisers; Sydney I, Melbourne I and Brisbane I. However, smaller ships such as destroyers and frigates are named after towns and rivers such as the frigate HMAS Parramatta.

The Navy has also adopted British conventions in that it reuses names in later generations of ships to help foster a sense of tradition. For example HMAS Sydney is now continuing its legacy into a fourth generation with the commissioning of HMAS Sydney IV in 1983.

(c) Number and diversity of personnel

Today, the Navy comprises close to 14 000 permanent members, making up 24.35 per cent of the ADF workforce.

Of this population, around 18.5 per cent are women. Approximately five per cent of the total Navy population come from a Non-English Speaking Background, and one per cent have an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background.

Women have until recently made up a very small proportion of those serving in the Navy. During World War II, women served in the Women’s Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS), a non-combat branch of the Navy, which continued until the 1980s. WRANS personnel worked in all naval establishments and performed a variety of shore-based duties. However, they were not permitted to serve at sea, due to Government policy preventing women from being employed in combat duties.

In 1983, women were permitted to serve aboard Australian naval ships and were fully integrated into the Navy, and the WRANS was permanently disbanded in 1984. Although all women recruited after 1984 were advised that they were eligible for service at sea, substantial numbers of women did not serve at sea until the early 1990s. By 1985, only five per cent of all Navy personnel were female. However, by 1990 this number had risen to 12 per cent, with this proportion increasing further to just over 18 per cent by 2010.

The recruiting of minors into the Navy began during the earliest days of World War I and reached its peak between the years of 1960 and 1984 when approximately 13 000 15 and 16 year old boys were recruited into the Navy’s junior recruit intake.
The ability of the Navy to employ minors was brought to an end, however, when Australia signed onto the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict in 2002. This protocol set a minimum age of 18 for participation in conflict and since this time, the ADF has observed a minimum recruitment age of 17.59

16.2 Overview of complaints of abuse in the Navy

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 2224 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse experienced by more than 1650 complainants during their time in Defence. This includes 861 cases of abuse in the Navy, experienced by more than 650 complainants.

It is important to note that the Taskforce has categorised the abuse experienced by each complainant as forming one or more ‘cases’ of abuse. Many complainants experienced multiple cases of abuse. One case generally relates to abuse experienced at one location (occasionally abuse experienced over a number of locations may be classed as one case of abuse if it is part of an ongoing campaign of abuse). The statistical information provided below is based on the number of cases of abuse in the Navy. The discussion of abuse throughout this section generally refers to the number of complainants, or individuals, who experienced a particular type or form of abuse during their time in the Navy.

In this report, the Taskforce provides a separate analysis of the abuse reported to have occurred during initial recruit and employment training to that experienced by members of Defence in regular service. This is because of the very significant number of complaints of abuse that occurred in recruit and employment training establishments, and because the abuse in these establishments raises some specific issues.

This distinction is particularly important in the case of the Navy, where close to half of all complaints detailed abuse that occurred in one of the four main recruit and employment training establishments (HMAS Leeuwin, HMAS Cerberus, HMAS NIRIMBA, and HMAS Creswell). These numbers are particularly high because of the very large number of complaints received regarding HMAS Leeuwin, which have been considered in a separate Taskforce report, the Report on abuse at HMAS Leeuwin.

The analysis of abuse reported to have occurred at Navy recruit and employment training establishments is based on a close review of complaints received by 328 complainants which raised at least one plausible allegation of abuse that occurred at the following locations: HMAS Leeuwin (211 complainants), HMAS Cerberus (64 complainants), HMAS NIRIMBA (42 complainants), and HMAS Creswell (12 complainants), as well as a small number of complainants who experienced abuse while undertaking initial training at other locations. A number of complainants experienced abuse at more than one of these locations.

Analysis of the complaints of abuse at these Navy recruit and employment training establishments reveals a disturbing pattern of abuse, most occurring within the context of an unofficial hierarchy amongst recruits and apprentices, the operation of which contributed to widespread and serious harassment and bullying, as well as serious sexual and physical violence. In addition, complainants reported that members of staff at these establishments were responsible for significant amounts of abuse, including the frequent administration of harsh training and disciplinary practices, as well as a significant number of cases of physical abuse and some cases of sexual abuse.

Complainants commonly reported specific abusive practices in these establishments, including ‘running the gauntlet’, ‘scrubbing’, ‘nuggetting’ or ‘blackballing’, and ‘vacuuming’. Other common practices included ‘blanket bashing’, ‘bed tipping’ and forced participation in fighting. It is important to note that young men experienced most of the abuse in Navy recruit and employment training establishments in the period between the 1960s and 1980s; a number of women also experienced abuse in more recent years, including some instances of serious sexual abuse and many instances of significant and ongoing sexual harassment.

The Taskforce also received complaints of abuse that occurred while complainants were undertaking regular Navy service. In order to provide a detailed summary of the nature of the abuse in regular service, the Taskforce undertook a close review of the complaints of abuse that occurred at the establishments which had the highest number of complaints.
This involved the close review of complaints received by 199 complainants which raised at least one plausible allegation of abuse that occurred during regular service at the following locations: HMAS Cerberus (45 complainants), HMAS Kuttabul (29 complainants), HMAS Albatross (24 complainants), HMAS Stirling (16 complainants), HMAS Creswell (11 complainants) and HMAS Nirimba (six complainants); and on the following ships: HMAS Sydney III (20 complainants), HMAS Melbourne II (14 complainants), HMAS Success II (14 complainants), HMAS Perth II (13 complainants), HMAS Brisbane II (11 complainants), HMAS Sydney IV (nine complainants), and HMAS Adelaide II (eight complainants). A number of complainants experienced abuse at more than one of these locations.

The review of these complaints revealed some patterns in the abuse reported by complainants who were in regular service in the Navy at the time of the abuse.

While the overwhelming majority of complainants who reported abuse in regular service were men, women were still disproportionately overrepresented in complaints of abuse – 40 per cent of all Navy complainants were female, as compared to their approximately 19 per cent representation in the Navy in 2010–2011. A large number of complainants who experienced abuse during regular service were very young at the time of the abuse. Almost all of the complainants in regular service were abused by someone who was of higher rank to them at the time of the abuse.

Of those who reported sexual abuse in regular service, a significant number reported that they were subjected to sexual assault. There were notable patterns in reports of sexual assault, including a high number of sexual assaults of young men on ships in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as a significant number of sexual assaults of women in later years. Relevant factors in sexual abuse generally included the targeting of people who were in vulnerable positions, such as when isolated or asleep, the use of physical violence, the consumption of alcohol by both subjects and alleged abusers, and the presence of multiple alleged abusers in a number of cases.

Both men and women were subjected to sexual harassment in the Navy, however it is the experience of women that is most notable. Women experienced pervasive and ongoing sexual harassment in the Navy, at both shore establishments and on ships, occurring until quite recently (reaching a peak in the 1990s and 2000s).

The Taskforce also received complaints of physical abuse during regular service in the Navy from the late 1950s to 2011, with the highest numbers relating to abuse that occurred during the 1970s and 1990s. Most of those who experienced physical abuse were men. Complainants described incidents of physical assault and threats of violence by both multiple and single alleged abusers, and physical abuse that occurred in a range of contexts, including as acts of intimidation, during violent sexual assaults, during initiation practices or as a denial of medical treatment.

Finally, harassment and bullying is reported to have occurred fairly evenly across the time period considered by the Taskforce. A significant majority of complainants who experienced harassment and bullying reported that it was carried out by direct supervisors, training instructors or others in a position of authority over them at the time of the abuse. Harassment and bullying in regular service was often described as an ongoing and sustained campaign over months or years. Complainants reported that they were targeted for abuse because of attributes that marked them out as different, including gender, age, perceived weakness and workplace performance. As with other services, a significant number of complainants also experienced harassment and bullying on the basis of illness or injury. Common forms of harassment and bullying included verbal abuse, unreasonable tasking and harsh disciplinary practices, interference with career progression, and social exclusion.

The statistics which appear in the descriptions of abuse below have been drawn from complaints at the locations regarding which the Taskforce received the highest number of complaints. These figures do not represent the total number of complaints received by the Taskforce of abuse within the Navy. Rather, they are used to represent trends and patterns in the abuse that has occurred over time. It should also be noted that the statistical information cited in this report pertains only to abuse reported to the Taskforce and is not able to be extrapolated to make broader conclusions about the nature and levels of abuse occurring within the Navy, due to the inherent limitations in the statistics collected. Despite these limitations, the statistics drawn from the complaints of abuse assessed by the Taskforce are useful in understanding and illuminating the prevalence of various types of abuse occurring within the Navy.
The sections below provide a summary of some of the key features of abuse reported to the Taskforce by complainants who served in the Navy, including:

- a statistical overview of abuse in the Navy;
- complaints of abuse in Navy recruit and employment training establishments;
- complaints of abuse during regular service in the Navy;
- locational case studies (HMAS Nirimba, HMAS Stirling, and Ships); and
- individual case studies.

16.3 Statistical overview of complaints of abuse in the Navy

(a) Number of cases

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 861 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse in the Navy (relating to more than 650 complainants).

Cases of abuse in the Navy account for 39 per cent of all plausible cases of abuse assessed by the Taskforce. Though the Navy did not account for the highest number of cases in terms of total numbers, the Navy was significantly overrepresented in cases of abuse considering its size relative to the Army and the Air Force. As noted in section 15.5(c) above, since the 1990s, the Navy has comprised around half as many personnel as the Army, and in decades prior, it often comprised even less.61 Despite this, the Taskforce assessed similar numbers of plausible cases of abuse in the Navy (861 cases) as in the Army (879 cases). In addition, there were more than double the number of cases involving abuse in the Navy as there were regarding abuse in the Air Force (378 cases).

[b] Abuse by decade

Compared to the other services, a large proportion of abuse in the Navy occurred during the 1960s and 1970s, rather than during the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. In 54 per cent of all cases relating to the Navy, the abuse occurred prior to 1980. By contrast, in the Army, the abuse occurred before 1980 in 31 per cent of cases, and in the Air Force, in just 25 per cent of cases.

While fewer cases of abuse in the Navy occurred in more recent decades, there were significantly more cases involving abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011 than in the previous decade (147 cases from 2000 to 2011, compared to 101 cases from 1990 to 1999). Abuse in the Navy that occurred between 2000 and 2011 is discussed further in section 19.3 below.

Graph 25: Navy cases by decade
(c) Abuse by sex of the complainant

Men were the complainants in 710 cases of abuse in the Navy (82 per cent of Navy cases), while women were the complainants in 151 cases of abuse in the Navy (18 per cent of Navy cases).

Women comprised a lower percentage of complainants who experienced abuse in the Navy than in the Army and the Air Force. Women were the complainants in 18 per cent of Navy cases, compared to 25 per cent of Army cases, and 37 per cent of Air Force cases.

However, in cases involving abuse that occurred in the Navy between 1990 and 2011, women made up a significant percentage of complainants. Women were the complainants in 43 per cent of Navy cases relating to abuse over this period, despite making up less than 19 per cent of Navy personnel over this period.61 This was similar to the percentage of cases from the Air Force over this period where women were complainants (46 per cent of cases), but was more than the percentage of cases from the Army over this period where women were complainants (37 per cent of cases).

For women in the Navy, the highest number of cases involved abuse that occurred in 2000-2011. For men in the Navy, the highest number of cases involved abuse that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, as shown in the graph below.

Graph 26: Sex of the complainant by decade (Navy)

(d) Types of abuse

As with all three services, harassment and bullying was the type of abuse most commonly experienced in the Navy, followed by physical abuse, then sexual abuse, and finally sexual harassment. Of cases relating to abuse that occurred in the Navy:

- 379 cases involved sexual abuse (44 per cent of Navy cases);
- 147 cases involved sexual harassment (17 per cent);
- 464 cases involved physical abuse (54 per cent); and
- 539 cases involved harassment and bullying (63 per cent).
A higher percentage of Navy cases involved sexual abuse than in the Army and Air Force (44 per cent of Navy cases, 33 per cent of Army cases, and 34 per cent of Air Force cases involved sexual abuse). Similarly, a higher percentage of Navy cases involved physical abuse than in the Army and Air Force (54 per cent of Navy cases, 49 per cent of Army cases, and 38 per cent of Air Force cases involved physical abuse).

The percentages of Navy cases that involved harassment and bullying and sexual harassment were similar to the percentages of cases in the Army and Air Force that involved harassment and bullying and sexual harassment, as shown in the graph below.

Graph 27: Navy cases by type of abuse

Graph 28: Types of abuse as a percentage of cases for each service
The types of abuse experienced by complainants during their time in the Navy have changed significantly over time. In the 1960s and 1970s, levels of sexual abuse and physical abuse were high, as shown in the graph below. After these decades, levels of sexual abuse and physical abuse fell substantially, while harassment and bullying remained prominent. Levels of sexual harassment remained fairly constant from the 1960s to the 2000s.

Graph 29: Navy cases by type of abuse by decade

The types of abuse experienced by men and women in the Navy were different. As in all services, women were more likely than men to have experienced sexual abuse and sexual harassment, and men were more likely than women to have experienced physical abuse and harassment and bullying. It is notable, however, that men in the Navy were more likely to have experienced sexual abuse or sexual harassment than men in the Army or the Air Force. A total of 27 per cent of men from both the Army and the Air Force experienced sexual abuse, compared to 42 per cent of men in the Navy. Six per cent of men in the Army and eight per cent of men in the Air Force experienced sexual harassment, compared to 11 per cent of men in the Navy.

In cases of abuse in the Navy:
- 53 per cent of women experienced sexual abuse (80 cases), compared to 42 per cent of men (299 cases);
- 48 per cent of women experienced sexual harassment (72 cases), compared to 11 per cent of men (75 cases);
- 17 per cent of women experienced physical abuse (26 cases), compared to 62 per cent of men (438 cases); and
- 56 per cent of women experienced harassment and bullying (84 cases), compared to 64 per cent of men (455 cases).

16.4 Complaints of abuse in Navy recruit and employment training establishments

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 861 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse within the Navy (39 per cent of all cases), experienced by more than 650 complainants.

It is important to note that the Taskforce has categorised the abuse experienced by each complainant as forming one or more ‘cases’ of abuse. Many complainants experienced multiple cases of abuse. One case generally relates to abuse experienced at one location (occasionally abuse experienced over a number of locations may be classed as one case of abuse if it is part of an ongoing campaign of abuse). The discussion of abuse throughout this section generally refers to the number of complainants, or individuals, who experienced a particular type or form of abuse during their time in the Navy.
As discussed in section 15.1(a) above, in this report, complaints of abuse that occurred during initial recruit and employment training are considered separately to those that occurred during regular service. This is because of the significant number of these complaints and because these complaints raise specific issues.

The Taskforce conducted a close review of complaints received by 328 complainants regarding abuse that occurred while they were undertaking initial training upon entry into the Navy at one of the four primary Navy training establishments: HMAS Leeuwin (211 complainants), HMAS Cerberus (64 complainants), HMAS Nirimba (42 complainants), HMAS Creswell (12 complainants), as well as a small number of complainants who experienced abuse while undertaking initial training at other locations. A number of complainants experienced abuse at more than one location.

The summary below is based on information provided by the 328 complainants who were undertaking initial recruit and employment training at these locations. It is important to note that where figures are given, they only relate to complaints of abuse experienced by people who were undertaking initial training at these locations. These figures do not represent the total number of complaints received by the Taskforce regarding abuse during initial training in the Navy. Rather, they are used to represent trends and patterns in the abuse that has occurred over time.

Of the 328 complainants who experienced abuse at the above locations, the vast majority were young boys. At the time of the abuse, complainants were generally between the ages of 15 and 18, with some complainants having experienced abuse as young as 14 years old. The proportion of complaints relating to initial recruit or employment training establishments is much higher in the Navy than in the other services. This is primarily due to the very large number of complaints received by the Taskforce relating to abuse experienced at HMAS Leeuwin. The Taskforce has already reported in detail on the abuse occurring at HMAS Leeuwin, as this establishment was specifically noted in the Taskforce’s Terms of Reference. Discussion of abuse at HMAS Leeuwin below is generally drawn from the Taskforce Report on abuse at HMAS Leeuwin.

Complainants who experienced abuse in Navy recruit and employment training establishments told the Taskforce that abuse by fellow recruits or apprentices occurred within the context of an informal hierarchy in which newer intakes were victimised by those undertaking training from previous, and thereby more ‘senior’, intakes. This varied between training establishments, particularly depending on the length of time individuals spent in training.

At HMAS Leeuwin (operating between 1960 and 1984), junior recruits studied for a period of one year at the Junior Recruit Training Establishment, with a new intake entering the school every three months. At HMAS Leeuwin, the informal hierarchy was one in which the newest intake members were referred to as ‘new grubs’, the next intake as ‘grubs’, the following intake as ‘shits’ and the most senior intake as ‘top shits’.

At the Navy Recruit School at HMAS Cerberus (operating from 1920 until the present), individuals undertook recruit training immediately upon their entry into the service, being especially vulnerable at their point of first contact with life in the Navy. At recruit school, every recruit class had ‘leading recruits’ tasked with mentoring the next intake. As such, leading recruits assumed certain responsibilities and authority over newer intakes, as well as the right to exercise additional privileges.

At the Apprentice Training Establishment at HMAS Nirimba (operating between 1953 and 1993), training took place over four years divided into six-monthly ‘terms’, with a final year apprentice working in the field. At HMAS Nirimba, a more junior apprentice would be referred to as a ‘sprog’ and often subjected to abuse by anyone more senior to them. In addition, selected eighth-term apprentices were assigned the title of ‘Hut seniors’ and given the authority to administer minor punishments, such as kit musters and extra work.

At HMAS Creswell, the length of training varied in each decade, but a similar hierarchy existed to that at other training establishments, whereby senior intakes were responsible for the supervision of newer intakes in their division. In some of these years, senior intakes were also empowered by staff to administer discipline and punishment on these newer intakes.

Complainants consistently reported that these informal hierarchies operated with tacit acceptance of staff and senior naval personnel, going so far as to say that it was ‘part of the system’ and the ‘Navy tradition of being “tough”.’
Complainants described how senior intakes who administered these punishments were ‘rewarded’ by being appointed to ‘quasi positions of power’ and spoke of an ‘accepted code of silence … implicitly approved by the hierarchy’. In addition, complainants told the Taskforce about forced participation in hazing or initiation practices carried out by groups of more senior recruits or apprentices against newer intakes, generally after-hours and outside of formal training. In these situations, abuse was often witnessed by other recruits and apprentices, adding to the humiliation of the complainant, as well as intimidating witnesses, creating a fear that they could be the next targets.

A number of complainants reported that particular factors which marked them out as ‘different’ within their cohort increased their risk of being targeted for abuse. These differences included a complainant’s youth and physical development, perceived physical weakness, race or religious beliefs, poor academic performance, and whether a complainant had made a formal report of abuse to Defence.

Complainants told the Taskforce that much of the abuse would occur at night time, and a number of complainants reported experiencing insomnia, sleep deprivation and a fear of sleeping, with one complainant who reported being so scared that he kept a flip knife under his pillow for protection, and another complainant who reported having bought an old .303 bayonet which he would use to threaten any person who entered his room at night.

The sections below provide a summary of the main types of abuse experienced during initial recruit and employment training at the Navy locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce.

### (a) Sexual abuse in Navy recruit and employment training establishments

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 379 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual abuse within the Navy (44 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Navy).

Of the 328 complainants who experienced abuse during initial recruit or employment training in the Navy at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 157 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual abuse (48 per cent of complaints reviewed). The alleged abusers in these complaints were both other recruits or apprentices (109 complainants) and members of staff (52 complainants).

Of the complaints involving sexual abuse where the alleged abuser was another peer undertaking initial training, alleged abusers were often a group of recruits or apprentices from a more senior intake, and the abuse often occurred in the context of either systematic harassment and bullying, or a hazing or initiation practice. Sexual abuse by other recruits or apprentices included sexual assault, as well as practices such as nuggeting and blackballing, and vacuuming.

Of the complaints of sexual abuse where the alleged abuser was a staff member, alleged abusers often had direct supervisory role over complainants, and commonly held the rank of Able Seaman, Leading Seaman or Petty Officer. Sexual abuse carried out by staff members largely involved either sexual assault or forms of indecent assault.

The Taskforce also received reports of junior recruits from HMAS Leeuwin and apprentices from HMAS Nirimba who were sexually abused by sponsors whom they stayed with on overnight or on weekend leave. In these cases, the sexual abuse involved one case of anal rape and forced oral sex, one case of forced oral sex and inappropriate touching, and two cases of forced masturbation.

The nature of the sexual abuse experienced during Navy recruit and employment training is discussed below, including sexual assault, indecent assault, as well as other forms of sexual abuse.

#### (i) Sexual assault

It started from delivering some ironing that I did for one of the seniors and I was usually paid for doing this. On this occasion however the senior apprentice … pulled my pants down and pushed me onto the bed. He said he would give me a blow job for payment. I felt someone behind me at this stage and I noticed an older man with grey hair standing there. I assume he was a senior officer. The senior apprentice then proceeded to put his finger in my anus and moved it very hard in a “back and forth” motion whilst sucking my penis. The older man said “pretend you are masturbating” and just stood there watching. The senior apprentice then penetrated me and raped me whilst the old man was breathing on me.
More than half of the total number of complaints of sexual abuse in Navy recruit and employment training establishments involved sexual assault (100 complainants). This included 51 complainants who reported having been sexually assaulted by other recruits or apprentices, and 34 complainants who reported having been sexually assaulted by the staff of these establishments. The majority of these complaints related to abuse that occurred at HMAS Leeuwin [52 complainants], followed by HMAS Cerberus [20 complainants]. Although a significant proportion of complainants who experienced sexual assault were male, a small number of female complainants also reported having experienced sexual assault during initial training. All incidents of sexual assault involving female complainants occurred after the 1980s, and it is particularly notable that almost all complaints of sexual assault occurring in these establishments after this period were made by female complainants.

Complainants told the Taskforce of incidents of sexual assault involving non-consensual actual or attempted anal and vaginal penetration. This included penetration by an alleged abuser’s penis, digital penetration, and penetration with an object. Complainants also reported being forced to give and receive oral sex.

A notable and disturbing feature in complaints of sexual assault that occurred in Navy recruit and employment training establishments is the number of incidents of sexual assault where the alleged abuser was another recruit or apprentice (51 complainants). In these cases, almost all alleged abusers were male and most abuse occurred prior to the 1980s.

Complainants who reported sexual assault by other recruits or apprentices told the Taskforce that they were often targeted after hours and when they were in vulnerable positions, such as while in bed, in the shower, or isolated from their peers. In a number of cases, complainants described attacks that appeared to be random, spontaneous and unprovoked, often involving being grabbed from behind without warning.

While many complainants reported being targeted by individual alleged abusers, a significant number of male complainants reported having been sexually assaulted by groups of their peers. In these cases, male complainants described being targeted in more public places, such as in rooms shared with their peers, or in bathrooms, and sexually assaulted in view of their peers. A number of complainants reported that the sexual assault by other recruits and apprentices involved anal penetration with an object, commonly a broom or mop handle (16 complainants).

Some complainants told the Taskforce that the sexual abuse was carried out by recruits or apprentices with the encouragement, knowledge or involvement of staff members. For example, a complainant who served at HMAS Leeuwin in the early 1970s told the Taskforce that a broom or mop handle was forcibly inserted into his anus by more senior recruits on a number of occasions in the presence of a member of staff:

I reported to the senior sailor as ordered that morning. He was there again with a number of the more senior junior recruits. ... He again ordered me to strip and go to the drying room. I left my clothes on the basin in the shower room. I was held down by some of the senior recruits and then felt pain like I had never felt before. I was held face down on the ground and then either a broom handle or mop handle was inserted into my anus. The pain was unbearable and I remember screaming. Someone put their hand over my mouth to stifle my screams. I remember there was a fair bit of laughter going on from them. I am not sure how long this incident lasted but I do not think it was a long time. The senior sailor then ordered the recruits out. As I was lying on the tiled floor, I remember him coming up close to me and whispering into my ear “you will learn to like it”. He pulled me up by my hair and then he put his tongue in my ear and licked the side of my mouth and then left the room. ...

Similar incidents like this occurred three or more times over a period that I am not sure of. The same senior sailor was again the perpetrator on these occasions. ... I knew that whenever the senior sailor was on night duty, our block was in for it. I was so frightened a couple of nights he was on duty that I hid and slept in the top of my wardrobe hiding from him until one night he found me in there. That was the worst night of all. Instead of using something like Vaseline, they used boot polish on the end of a mop handle as a form of lubricant which burnt and caused even more pain than the other times. I think there were only three senior recruits plus the senior sailor that night.
Many complainants reported that they were subjected to particularly serious physical assaults in the acts leading up to or during a sexual assault. This was especially the case in sexual assault carried out by other recruits or apprentices. Complainants reported being bashed and physically restrained before and during a sexual assault. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that at HMAS Nirimba in the early 1970s, he was dragged into the ablutions block with a kit bag over his head before being anally penetrated with an object:

I was verbally abused, bashed, stripped, covered in a grease of some kind and then scrubbed all over with floor scrubbing brushes. Then they started to cut off my body hair with a pair of scissors whilst shoving a mop or broom handle up my rectum.

Complaints of sexual assault from more recent years also involved particularly violent acts of abuse. Although the majority of these complainants were female, the Taskforce also received reports of violent sexual abuse against male complainants outside of a context of initiation or hazing practices. For example, one complainant recounted a particularly distressing experience in which he was anally penetrated numerous times over several hours:

Later that evening I was severely beaten after lights out. There were about 15 people involved in bashing me in the sleeping barracks. I was black and blue from the bashing. After the beating I was grabbed by [several apprentices]. I was placed face down over a desk, my underwear was removed and I was raped for several hours while being held down. If I tried to fight or move many of them would punch my spine and head until I stopped struggling.

A number of complainants told the Taskforce that alcohol was a factor in the sexual assault they experienced during their initial training, and a small number of complainants told the Taskforce of having had their drinks spiked before an incident of sexual assault.

In more recent complaints of sexual assault, complainants often reported that they were intoxicated at the time of the abuse, particularly in the instances of sexual assault reported by female complainants. Complainants told the Taskforce of falling asleep after having consumed alcohol, and waking to find that they were being sexually assaulted.

In other cases, complainants described being pressured into engaging in sexual activity but having little or no capacity to resist the sexual advances of an alleged abuser on account of their intoxication. Complainants also reported being too intoxicated to physically resist an alleged abuser while being sexually assaulted. One complainant told the Taskforce of an incident during the late 1990s when she was sexually assaulted by a group of peers while visibly intoxicated and in view of other Navy personnel who took no steps to intervene:

I had never lived away from home before, and this was my first experience with alcohol. I became intoxicated. I was walking back from the bathroom when a member from my [class] grabbed me and took me to another room, straight across the corridor from my own. This room belonged to another male, and there was a third in the room also. I was intoxicated and overpowered by the three men. They sexually assaulted me.

While they were assaulting me, one of them opened the door and allowed several other naval personnel to watch. When they had finished, they threw me out into the corridor with no clothing on. I was greeted by another member patrolling the building. I was let back into my room and left alone until morning.

It is also of particular concern that a significant number of complainants reported that they were sexually assaulted by members of staff at Navy recruit and training establishments (37 complainants). In almost all of these complainants, the alleged abuser was male. A significant number of complainants, particularly those who experienced abuse at HMAS Leeuwin, told the Taskforce that they were forced to perform oral sex on a staff member, or forced to receive oral sex from a staff member.

Of particular concern were reports by complainants that staff members who sexually assaulted them encouraged them to drink alcohol prior to the sexual assault while out socially, or as a ‘reward’ for good work.

Some female complainants also reported serious incidents of sexual assault and attempted sexual assault carried out by staff of training establishments. For example, one complainant reported that a Petty Officer entered her room, forced her on her back, touched her breasts and attempted to sexually assault her. Another complainant told the Taskforce that in the early 2000s, she was sexually assaulted by her former training instructor:
He kept making advances and I kept physically pushing him away and saying no but he wouldn’t stop. He [was] bigger than me and he kept forcing himself on me. He removed some of my clothing. I could not fight him any more so I turned my head away while he raped me. … On the drive back to [the base] we did not speak until I went to leave the car and he said, “you can’t tell anybody about this or I will get in trouble.”

Other complainants reported being coerced to engage in sexual activity with members of staff out of fear that not complying with their requests would impact negatively on their career.

Many complainants, particularly those who were sexually assaulted by members of staff, were threatened and warned by alleged abusers not to report the abuse. For example, one complainant from HMAS Leeuwin was anally penetrated by a senior officer and did not report the abuse out of fear of the potential consequences, and because the alleged abuser told him that no one would believe him. Another complainant from HMAS Leeuwin reported that he was subjected to multiple incidents of serious sexual assault by a staff member, including anal penetration, who threatened to kill him if he told anyone.

Many complainants, both male and female, told the Taskforce of experiencing an ongoing fear or threat of experiencing further sexual assault throughout the duration of their initial training. A number of complainants also told the Taskforce that they were ridiculed, accused of being a homosexual, or accused of being promiscuous once it became known to others on base that they had been sexually assaulted.

(ii) Indecent assault

The Taskforce received a significant number of complaints involving indecent assault while complainants were undertaking initial training in the Navy (91 complainants). This includes 81 male complainants and 10 female complainants.

Acts of indecent assault experienced by women during initial training were carried out by both staff and other recruits and apprentices. Female complainants told the Taskforce of being touched inappropriately, including being groped, having their breasts rubbed, hands moved across their body, and being kissed without their consent. Other complainants reported having their clothes removed, exposing their breasts. One complainant, who served in the Navy in the early 1980s, reported being offered a lift home after a social function during which an alleged abuser exposed his penis, and then proceeded to grope and kiss her:

I got in as I felt I should trust a fellow sailor, not long down the road he had pulled in to the dark car park. … He got closer to me and I smell alcohol on his breath. He then grabbed me with one arm, undid his fly, and started to bring his penis out with his other hand as he clumsily tried to get his pants down. The car had bench seating and he slid closer to me and started grabbing and tugging my clothes as he was climbing on top of me. His lips were all over my face and mouth and his hands were everywhere. … That is when I screamed a loud piercing noise right in his ear as fear had taken control of me. I do remember somehow grabbing the handle of the car door. As it flung open, I jumped out and ran away crying in fear. He slid over the edge and started to abuse me calling me a scupper and a cock teaser, and if I told anyone he would get me and all the other sailors would know that I was a slut and a liar.

Many male complainants reported having experienced acts of indecent assault in Navy recruit and employment training establishments, particularly in earlier decades. A significant number of complainants reported instances of forced masturbation, particularly complainants who served at HMAS Leeuwin during the 1960s and 1970s. This included waking up to find that they were being masturbated by another recruit, or in the case of one complainant, being masturbating on by two recruits who ejaculated on his face while he was sleeping. Other complainants from HMAS Leeuwin reported being subjected to forced masturbation by their sponsors, and one complainant reported being encouraged to drink alcohol then taken to his sponsor’s bedroom where his sponsor then fondled his penis and performed oral sex on him.

A number of complainants also reported incidents of indecent assault involving being urinated on. For example, one complainant from HMAS Leeuwin said that he was stripped and then ‘pissed on’ by older recruits. A number of complainants from HMAS Leeuwin also told the Taskforce of being forced to drink semen.
As I got into my room, a group of approximately six to eight boys came in, grabbed me and threw me to the floor. ... I was screaming and trying to get loose but they forced me to the ground. I noticed that [one of the recruits] had a can of coke in one hand and was masturbating himself with his other hand. [He] was looking at me while he was masturbating. I then saw [him] ejaculate into the can of coke he was holding in his hand. I was unable to yell out as one of the boys had his hands in my mouth to hold my mouth open. After [he] ejaculated into the can, he poured its contents into my mouth that was being forced open. The can was half full of coke. Everyone was just standing there laughing at me and then left me lying on the floor. I was gagging and trying to cough up the contents of the can. This incident lasted approximately five minutes. ... After this I was left alone by the group for about a month. However, the incident was being talked about amongst groups of people. Everybody in my division knew what had occurred to me. I felt humiliated, embarrassed, dirty and scared.

Other complainants described being inappropriately touched, including having their genitals groped, being rubbed with another junior recruit's erect penis, waking at night to find that someone was caressing their penis, or having a penis put into their hand while they were asleep.

Some complainants described a fear that inappropriate touching would escalate to more serious forms of sexual abuse, for example, one complainant who served at HMAS Leeuwin in the late 1960s told the Taskforce:

Often whilst I was sleeping, guys would take the opportunity to frighten me with inappropriate touching etc. Hands would go under my bedding while I was trying to get to sleep or while asleep and my penis would be rubbed and touched. Whilst it was always just teasing and I was never sexually abused, I lived in constant fear of the real thing occurring.

(iii) Other forms of sexual abuse

The Taskforce received reports of a number of other forms of sexual abuse occurring in the Navy, including nugetting or blackballing, and vacuuming. These forms of sexual abuse also amount to indecent assault, but have been discussed separately due to the specific characteristics of these practices.

One of the most common forms of sexual abuse carried out by recruits and apprentices in acts of bullying or in hazing or initiation practices was nugetting or blackballing (39 complainants). Complainants commonly told the Taskforce that they were held down by a group of their peers and partially or fully stripped naked before boot polish, toothpaste or another substance was forcibly smeared on their genitals or anal area, sometimes with a hard brush. Only male complainants reported experiencing this type of abuse. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that he was targeted by a group of his cohort while leaving the shower block:

[A group of peers] grabbed me when I was leaving the showers, headed for my cabin. They held me down and used a shoe brush to cover my genitals with boot polish. They then got some white shoe cleaner and covered me with it; my face, back, front and legs. They kicked me before letting me go. After the attack, I went back to my cabin ... and closed the door.

Some complainants reported that the boot polish or other substance was applied with a hard brush, causing additional pain. Other complainants told the Taskforce that the substances smeared on their genitals were often difficult to remove, and described the pain involved in having to scrub themselves clean in the showers afterwards, with one complainant who reported being reduced to using a household cleaning powder in order to clean himself following an incident of nugetting.

For example, one complainant who served at HMAS Leeuwin in the late 1960s described his experience as follows:

I was also subject to a nugetting on a number of occasions. I think there were two different incidents. This involved being held down and stripped by recruits in my own division and having boot polish (once) and Deep Heat (once) applied to my genitals. Deep Heat is a menthol based muscle treatment which gives a burning sensation when applied to the skin. It certainly caused a burning sensation when applied (roughly) to my genitals. Boot polish burns a little as well (I believe it had alcohol in it), but was not as excruciating as Deep Heat. But boot polish was very hard to remove. The process of others applying the polish or Deep Heat is rough and I received bruises to my genitals in the process.

Another type of sexual abuse reported in a number of complaints of hazing or initiation practices at HMAS Leeuwin, was vacuuming or ‘Sadie-ing’, involving being set upon by a small group of junior recruits, restrained while their underwear was removed, and a vacuum cleaner hose was forcibly applied to their genitals. The Taskforce received several complaints.
Complainants who were subjected to vacuuming during initial training told the Taskforce that the practice was painful, terrifying and humiliating. For example, one complainant who served at HMAS Leeuwin in late 1970s described his experience as follows:

I was lying in bed in the evening when I was confronted by junior recruits. They had an industrial vacuum cleaner with them. They approached me and restrained me. I knew what I was in store for. I had heard the screams before from other victims. I tried to fight out of the situation but there were about six recruits involved. I was yelling at the time but they used a pillow to smother the screams. They removed my underwear, started the vacuum cleaner and placed the tube on my genitals. This went on for 30 seconds to a minute. It seemed longer at the time. Once they had given me the treatment they left laughing. I could hear their laughing throughout the procedure along with various spectators. At the time I thought I was going to lose my testicles. As soon as they left I dressed and ran to the furthest fenceline at HMAS Leeuwin where I stayed for a couple of hours. I was too afraid to return. I considered “jumping the fence” and leaving but decided against it. I returned to bed after those couple of hours, nobody said anything. It was as if nothing had happened. Recruits were too afraid of being assaulted themselves.132

(b) Sexual harassment in Navy recruit and employment training establishments

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 147 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual harassment within the Navy (17 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Navy).

Of the 328 complainants who experienced abuse during initial recruit or employment training in the Navy at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 37 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual harassment (11 per cent of complaints reviewed).

Despite the relatively low incidence of sexual harassment complaints to the Taskforce, this type of abuse is likely to have been much more prevalent within the Navy than is indicated by the statistics, for a number of reasons. This is largely because many complaints of sexual abuse may have included behaviour that could also have been categorised as sexual harassment.

Both men and women experienced sexual harassment in Navy recruit and employment training establishments.

In many ways, the sexual harassment experienced by women in Navy recruit and employment training establishments was similar in nature to that experienced by women in regular service (discussed in section 16.5(b) below). For example, female complainants reported being subjected to countless derogatory comments and verbal abuse on account of their gender, including being called ‘dogs’,133 ‘double-bummed sailors’,134 ‘prick teaser’,135 ‘slut’,136 and ‘whore’,137 and the WRANS Quarters at HMAS Cerberus described by male sailors as the ‘Cunt Farm’.138

It is of particular concern that some women reported being subjected to severe sexual harassment immediately after arriving at Navy recruit and employment training establishments. For example, one complainant who joined the Navy in the early 1980s told the Taskforce:

On my first day as a recruit .. we were marched to the junior sailors mess (dinner hall). Upon entering, the sailors who were already dining commenced banging their cutlery on the tables in unison. They were yelling out “dogs” and barking like dogs at us. This continued for several minutes. I remember looking up to hear a sailor tell me that “I’m going to fuck you”. We made it to the servery line where our meal was slapped onto our plates. One of the cooks said “You’d better get used to this, welcome to the Navy”.139

Male complainants experienced sexual harassment in Navy recruit and employment training establishments over the entire period of their operation. However, of most concern is the sexual harassment of young men and boys who were recruits and apprentices between the 1960s and 1980s. Complainants told the Taskforce that the environment within training establishments was highly sexualised, one complainant reporting it to be ‘perverted’.140
Male complainants who experienced sexual harassment in Navy recruit and employment training establishments reported being called ‘poofs’, or being asked questions about their sexual activities such as if they ‘look it up the arse’. Complainants reported that they were constantly subjected to offensive gestures, suggestive behaviours, sexual innuendos and lewd jokes. Other complainants told the Taskforce of having comments made about the size of their penises and whether or not they were circumcised.

Some complainants spoke of feeling extremely uncomfortable about having staff members watch them shower and dress. For example, one complainant described the sexual harassment he experienced while undertaking initial training at HMAS Leeuwin in the late 1970s:

“During our first showers we discovered that there were no curtains on the cubicles for privacy. I found this extremely disturbing as it gave several older sailors the opportunity to walk slowly up and down the cubicles and survey our private parts for size and “type”. They would say words to the effect of “show me your cock boy” or “we’ve got a dirty little boy over here”. As it turned out anyone who had an uncircumcised penis was to endure constant abuse, both verbal and physical; such as being hit in the crotch or penis with a rubber washing machine hose. …

Grown men at the base would ask you how often you wanked and how big your cock was. I was still a little boy and these men were between 30 and 50 years old. It was disgusting.”

(c) Physical abuse in Navy recruit and employment training establishments

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 464 cases as raising plausible allegations of physical abuse within the Navy (54 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Navy).

Of the 328 complainants who experienced abuse during initial recruit or employment training in the Navy at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 255 complainants reported having been subjected to physical abuse (78 per cent of complaints reviewed). The alleged abusers in these complaints were both other recruits and apprentices (207 complainants) and members of staff (83 complainants).

Physical abuse was experienced by complainants in Navy recruit and employment training establishments over the period from the early 1950s to 2011. However, the vast majority of physical abuse reported to the Taskforce occurred throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

The physical abuse experienced in Navy recruit and employment training establishments was closely linked to the harassment and bullying that occurred in these locations. As described in section 16.2 above, senior recruits or apprentices typically exercised authority over more junior members in an informal hierarchy which was generally known of and condoned by members of staff. The assertion of authority within this hierarchy often resulted in the physical abuse of younger or more junior recruits and apprentices, particularly those who resisted the informal hierarchy.

In cases where physical abuse was carried out by a staff member of a Navy recruit or employment training establishment, the abuse often occurred in the context of harsh training or disciplinary practices, and in some cases, in apparently random circumstances. Some complainants also experienced physical abuse by members of staff in the form of an unreasonable failure to allow or provide access to medical assistance.

The nature of the physical abuse experienced in Navy recruit and employment training establishments is discussed below. This includes physical assault, threats of violence, and a number of more specific forms of abuse reported by male complainants.

(i) Physical assault

A significant number of complainants reported that they experienced physical assault as a result of resisting the informal hierarchies that existed in Navy recruit and employment training establishments. A large number of complainants reported being attacked or ‘filled in’ by more senior recruits or apprentices either acting alone or within a group, as a
result of their refusal to accede to the demands made of them. As one complainant who served at HMAS Leeuwin in the late 1970s told the Taskforce:

They would use pure thuggery and intimidation, bad threats and physical violence to steal my cigarettes and cash, which I rarely had anyway. On a daily basis I would endure this treatment. ... For no reason at all, I would be belittled and slapped hard in the back of the head three to four times. They would jump on my toes to deface my polished boots, steal my cap and pass it around spitting in it and making it filthy dirty. ... One of the worst acts was to grab me from behind in a headlock and use one or two knuckles to cause friction and banging on the middle of my skull. ... I can remember that I couldn't breathe until they let me go crying and gasping in panic. ... Another of their favourites was to get hold of me and slap me hard in the back of the head three to four times. Getting a meal at the canteen was a daily torture or harassment, being physically dragged to the end of the line all the time. ... I was always grabbed from behind in a headlock until I couldn't breathe, kicked in the back of my legs to bring me down, kicking my ankles and my tailbone hard.

Complainants from other bases also reported instances where physical assault was used as a means to exert authority. For example, a number of complainants from HMAS Creswell spoke about being physically assaulted as punishment for failing to complete unreasonable tasks ordered by a senior peer, and a complainant who served at HMAS Nirimba in the late 1960s was punched in the stomach after he attempted to stand up to a senior apprentice by telling him that he had 'had enough'.

The Taskforce heard many other reports of physical assault by other recruits or apprentices which involved complainants being punched, dragged and beaten, 'hit ... across the backside', slapped across the face, being hit with various objects, hung or thrown out of windows, being kicked in the stomach, and the back of the head, as well as having their heads held in a toilet while it was flushed in a practice known as a 'royal flush'.

A large proportion of the physical abuse carried out by members of staff in Navy recruit and employment training establishments took the form of isolated physical assaults in the context of a staff member abusing their position of authority while recruits or apprentices where undergoing instruction. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that she was physically assaulted during a training session by the Petty Officer responsible for supervision of that session. Another complainant described being 'routinely electrocuted' for the amusement of his supervisors while undergoing training at HMAS Nirimba in the early 1980s.

Other instances of physical abuse by staff appear to have involved violence as a means of maintaining control, such as one complainant who stated that he was punched in the head by a staff member after complaining about the food he received. Other reports of physical assault appeared to have been random in nature. For example, one complainant who served at HMAS Cerberus in the late 1980s told the Taskforce that he was kicked in the head, arm and ribs by a Leading Seaman who was intoxicated and had taken a disliking to him for no apparent reason:

[The Leading Seaman] became verbally aggressive ... and told me he wanted to see how fit I was. He told me to come outside and to strip down to my underpants. ... I continued to do as I was ordered to, sit ups, push up, [the Leading Seaman] then sat on my back and ordered me to do push ups. ... [U]ntil I was exhausted. ... He was calling me names and telling me he could squash me like a bug. ... I couldn't breathe properly and tried to move to take a breath, [the Leading Seaman] then got aggressive towards me and kicked me in the side of my ribs, while he continued to kick me he was telling me he was going to sort me out for good. I tried to get up and was kicked in the stomach several times and fell back to the ground. I then felt a big blow to the back of my head and it left me dazed and confused. I was screaming for help and was then kicked more times in the head, arm and ribs.

In many complaints of abuse by members of staff, complainants were subjected to physical assaults as part of the administration of harsh training exercises or discipline. These assaults were frequently carried out with an object or piece of equipment used for drill or training purposes, such as a rifle, stick or baton. In other cases, staff members carrying out training or disciplinary practices punched, hit, kicked or otherwise physically assaulted recruits or apprentices with their fists, feet or other parts of their body.
For example, one complainant who served at HMAS Leeuwin in the late 1960s stated that he was physically assaulted by a number of different instructors during drill practice:

[Gl]unny instructors would lay in wait with canes and long leather bayonet scabbards and brutally attack us every day as we picked up our rifles for drill practice. This induced much panic and anxiety in all of us boys. Kicks to the shins with hobnail boots, hard twisting of noses, screwing of ears, punches to the solar plexus, much physical and mental torture was handed out by these instructors with sadistic glee.162

Another complainant who was also at HMAS Leeuwin in the late 1960s reported being subjected to beatings on multiple occasions by a particular staff member:

[I] was continually punished by a staff member [who] would hit me with rubber which had come off a squeegee. ... He also forced me to “bunny hop” around the parade ground while holding heavy equipment, such as a .303 rifle above my head. The beatings I suffered from him were brutal and quite extreme and they were continuous. I considered the beatings to be worse than what I had suffered from fellow recruits because the staff members were being paid to look after the junior recruits and yet they were beating us in the most horrendous way.163

(ii) Threats of violence

A large number of complainants to the Taskforce experienced physical abuse in the form of intimidation and threats with violence by their peers during initial recruit or employment training in the Navy. Complainants described constant threats of violence164 such as threats to bash165 or being labelled ‘dead meat’.166 One complainant who was at HMAS Nirrimba in the late 1980s told the Taskforce that he and others were often told by another apprentice to ‘get out of the way or I will fuck you in the arse’.167

Another complainant, who served at HMAS Cerberus in the late 1990s, told the Taskforce of a more senior recruit that:

[R]egularly called me a cunt and told me he was going to kill me. I tried to speak to him about it. I spoke to the [military police] about it but nothing ever changed. He drank heavily and was violent but he was worse when he was sober.168

Complainants also spoke of the impact of witnessing acts of abuse against their peers as creating an environment of intimidation, such as one incident where a junior apprentice witnessed a classmate being driven into by a car full of senior apprentices.169 Another complainant told the Taskforce of the frustration and anger he felt from witnessing regular beatings of his friend by senior apprentices, knowing that if he intervened he would be the next targeted for abuse.170

Many complainants reported how threats of violence would escalate into actual physical abuse.171

(iii) Physical constraint

A number of complainants experienced physical abuse in the form of being physically constrained at both HMAS Nirrimba and HMAS Cerberus (19 complainants). This included being locked in a wardrobe or hung in a sea bag on a rotary line for hours,172 and being hung up between toilets with a broomstick through the arms of overalls, before being sprayed with a fire hose and hit repeatedly.173

Of note is that a number of these incidents of physical constraint took place in conjunction with sexual abuse. For example, one complainant who served at HMAS Nirrimba in the late 1980s and was 17 years old at the time of the abuse, described being bashed by about 15 people in his sleeping barracks, then forcibly constrained and sexually assaulted. He told the Taskforce:

After the beating I was grabbed by several apprentices. ... I was placed face down over a desk, my underwear was removed and I was raped for several hours while being held down.174

Another complainant told the Taskforce about how he was ‘tied naked’ to racks in a drying room for ‘hours one evening’ by other recruits at HMAS Cerberus, which he described as ‘totally demeaning’.175
(iv) Bed tipping

Another common form of physical abuse reported to the Taskforce involved the practice of bed tipping, where an individual would be thrown out of their bed in the middle of the night when their bed was rolled upside down or up-ended by another peer. This practice appears to have been particularly prevalent at HMAS Nirimba, where at least 17 complainants reported experiencing this form of abuse over the 1960s to late 1980s, with only a small number of cases reported at HMAS Cerberus and at HMAS Creswell. One complainant who served at HMAS Nirimba in the late 1960s recounted his experience as follows:

I remember laying in my bed, terrified, as I heard the horrific commotion at the end of the hut getting closer and closer to me. ... And then, suddenly, it was my turn to succumb to this brutal treatment. First a punch to the stomach or groin and then; bang, thud. My bed would be on top of me again with the weight of my mattress and bedding weighing me down making it difficult to get up. Often instead of my bed being rolled over, it would be up-ended vertically against the wall so that I would be pinned upside-down against the wall with no means of escape. When this occurred, I would be visibly shaken and traumatised.

(v) Blanket bashing

The Taskforce received a number of complaints involving blanket bashing in Navy recruit and employment training establishments (23 complainants). Complainants often described being held down by multiple alleged abusers while they were punched repeatedly in the stomach and chest. Many complainants reported that these incidents would take place at night, during which they would be trapped in their beds and beaten while their faces were covered by blankets or sheets so they could not identify the abusers. In some cases, complainants also reported being wrapped in a blanket and hit with objects such as bats.

In a small number of complaints, a blanket bashing took place in conjunction with a serious sexual assault. For example, one complaint who served at HMAS Nirimba in the early 1980s told the Taskforce:

One weekend I was sleeping in my bed, when I was woken up by slamming doors. ... Several people ran into my room. ... I was then held down and [my] bedding pulled down, I was on my belly with my head being held toward the wall. ... Then my pyjamas were pulled off and my legs spread, all the while they were yelling and laughing, saying "welcome to the Navy sprog". They forced what I think was a mop handle toward my anus and [they] tried to push it in. ... The next thing I knew the bedding was thrown back on me and I was hit several times before the mattress was flipped causing me to be under it and the bedding.

(vi) Scrubbing

The Taskforce received a number of reports from complainants who were subjected to a scrubbing, where recruits or apprentices would forcibly scrub a peer with equipment such as hard-bristled brooms, scrubbing brushes, steel wool, or abrasive cleaning products. Some complainants reported that they were scrubbed because their peers thought that they did not wash or they were in some way considered unclean or unhygienic.

This practice appears to have been particularly prevalent at HMAS Leeuwin where at least 18 complainants reported being subjected to scrubbing by other junior recruits throughout the 1960s to the 1980s. In addition, four incidents of scrubbing were reported to have occurred at HMAS Nirimba between the 1970s and throughout the 1980s.

Complainants to the Taskforce reported how scrubbings frequently caused bleeding, and as one complainant described, the brooms ‘literally tore small strips of skin off and left the victim bloodied and scratched all over’. Elements of sexual abuse also become apparent in the descriptions of scrubbings provided by some complainants, in that their genitals or anal area often received particular attention by alleged abusers. For example, a complainant who served at HMAS Leeuwin in the late 1960s described his experience as follows:

Recruits would be stripped naked, thrown into a cold bath and scrubbed with steel wool and hard scrubbing brushes. I can recall this happened to me twice, and was carried out ... on me by a few recruits in my division. It was, I was told, because I was a dirty Pom.
(vii) Running the gauntlet

A commonly practiced form of physical abuse reported to the Taskforce is a practice known as running the gauntlet. This practice was prevalent in the Navy, particularly at HMAS Leeuwin where at least 72 complainants experienced this form of abuse, largely in the 1960s and 1970s. A small number of complainants reported experiencing similar practices at HMAS Cerberus and at HMAS Nirimba.

Running the gauntlet involved recruits being forced to run down a hallway or corridor lined with a group of more senior recruits who would use pillow cases full of items including shoes and boots, soap bars, large hardcover books, rocks and Navy-issue dirks (heavy folding knives) to hit the participants as they ran from one end to the other. These practices generally involved large groups of recruits, with one complainant numbering the recruits carrying out the gauntlet at “100 or more”. In another account, recruits were stripped naked before being forced to participate.

One former junior recruit who served at HMAS Leeuwin in the late 1960s described his experience as follows:

We were forced to run through a double line [of] seniors, who were armed with pillow cases containing heavy boots and large hardcover books. They swung the pillows at us as we ran through the lines. They beat us around the head and shoulders. Those juniors who could not run the whole gauntlet and who were knocked to the floor were kicked and beaten until they ran again. I was injured and suffered bleeding from the nose, a split lip and bruising over my body.

The Taskforce received reports of a number of injuries that resulted from running the gauntlet, including lost teeth, a broken jaw and being knocked unconscious. One complainant who served at HMAS Leeuwin in the late 1960s told the Taskforce about collective injuries sustained by his peers after being made to run the gauntlet:

Between us, broken noses, broken wrists, arms and legs, fractured collarbones, twisted and sprained joints, black eyes, bruises, cuts and broken teeth.

(viii) Forced participation in fighting

A number of complainants experienced physical abuse in the form of forced participation in fighting, which appears to have been particularly common in Navy recruit and employment training establishments. This practice was particularly prevalent at HMAS Leeuwin, where at least 37 complainants reported being subjected to this form of abuse. Complainants also experienced forced participation in fighting at HMAS Nirimba, HMAS Cerberus and HMAS Creswell (five complainants).

One of the major sporting activities at HMAS Leeuwin was formal boxing tournaments which were attended by staff members and, on occasion, public officials and other persons outside the Navy. Participation in such tournaments, known as the ‘windmill’ or the ‘mill’, was perceived by many complainants as being a compulsory activity. Many complainants reported that they were made to fight other junior recruits in such tournaments, sometimes in circumstances where their opponent was older or larger than them, and sometimes where they had no training or previous boxing experience. Similarly, a complainant told the Taskforce that at HMAS Nirimba in the early 1980s, instructors constantly paired off smaller apprentices against larger apprentices as a way of resolving conflicts.

Complainants described some common injuries recruits or apprentices received as a result of participating in these fights, including being knocked out, and having noses and ribs broken. One complainant described the prospect of being made to participate in forced fighting as terrifying, and reported that after one beating he was covered with his own blood.

(d) Harassment and bullying in Navy recruit and employment training establishments

He did so many things to me. He wiped shit (literally) on my cabin door handle. He put shit on my car door handle. He spat on me. Would spit on the door handle. He threw a bottle in my face and cut my eye. I sought medical treatment at the hospital. I told them what had happened but didn’t mention his name.

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 539 cases as raising plausible allegations of harassment and bullying within the Navy (63 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Navy).
Of the 328 complainants who experienced abuse during initial recruit or employment training in the Navy at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 242 complainants reported having been subjected to harassment and bullying (74 per cent of complaints reviewed). The alleged abusers in these complaints were both other recruits and apprentices (180 complainants) and members of staff (147 complainants). Of these complainants, the majority were males who experienced abuse during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Most of the harassment and bullying in Navy recruit and employment training establishments was carried out by other recruits and apprentices. As noted in section 16.2 above, the majority of the abuse of recruits and apprentices serving in training establishments occurred within a context of an informal hierarchy in which newer intakes were victimised by those undertaking training from more senior intakes. Consequently, harassment and bullying is closely linked to both sexual abuse and physical abuse in recruit and employment training establishments. The Taskforce also received reports of harassment and bullying carried out by the staff of these establishments, particularly through the administration of harsh training and discipline.

The nature of the harassment and bullying experienced in Navy recruit and employment training establishments is discussed below. This includes verbal abuse, unreasonable tasks and demands, interference with personal property, harsh punishment and disciplinary practices, and harassment and bullying carried out by members of staff.

(i) Verbal abuse

Many complainants told the Taskforce of being ridiculed and denigrated by their fellow recruits or apprentices on a daily basis. This often occurred in situations where complainants were particularly vulnerable, for example, being taunted in the showers about the size of their genitals. Other complainants reported being told by their peers to ‘go kill’ themselves, or told they were ‘full of shit’.

(ii) Unreasonable tasks and demands

The Taskforce received a number of complaints regarding harassment and bullying in the form of being made to perform unreasonable tasks and demands. Within the informal hierarchies which operated in training establishments, more senior recruits or apprentices often assumed the right to claim privileges over the newer intakes, and enforced this by way of intimidation, threats and physical violence. This was reported to occur in all Navy recruit and employment training establishments. As one complainant from HMAS Leeuwin stated, ‘[t]hose recruits who had been there for nine months were “the kings of the crop” and controlled what happened amongst all the other recruits less senior than them’.

Complainants reported that they were ordered to complete unreasonable or physically demanding tasks and made to perform everyday chores. This included being made to spit-polish boots and clean clothing belonging to senior peers, clean bathrooms with a toothbrush, accede to demands for items such as money or cigarettes, and accept more senior recruits or apprentices ‘jacking’ the meal queue (pushing ahead into the queue during mealtimes).

As noted in section 16.4(c) above, complainants consistently reported that harassment and bullying frequently spilled over into more serious physical abuse, particularly if they showed resistance to the assumption of privileges and demands by more senior recruits and apprentices.

(iii) Interference with personal property

Many complainants told the Taskforce of harassment and bullying involving interference with their personal property, carried out in the context of an environment in which uncleanliness was subject to punishment. A number of complainants reported ‘bishing’ and vandalism of their rooms, including locker break-ins where their property would be scattered on the floor, placed outside on fire escapes or hidden, or having their clean whites and clean sheets trampled on until they were dirty, resulting in having to wash them again. Other complainants reported having toilet water thrown over them as they slept, having their beds urinated on (either when empty or occupied), finding faeces had been placed in their beds, or waking up to find live and dead fish in their beds. One complainant who served at HMAS Nirimba in the late 1960s reported an incident where an activated fire extinguisher was thrown through his window and cold water sprayed on his bedding as punishment for previously attempting to stand up to a senior apprentice.
A complainant who was at HMAS Leeuwin in the late 1970s told the Taskforce:

[0]ne night … I was woken out of my sleep by being head butted by the two biggest junior recruits, there would have been 30 to 40 junior recruits crammed into the room. The experience still haunts me today. Everyone was screaming abuse, my bed was pulled to bits, sheets torn up and thrown out the second floor window. I was left on the floor curled up, others were slipping the boot in and spitting all over me. I was sobbing, crying and petrified, it seemed to go on forever, I didn’t want to live anymore.214

(iv) Harsh punishment and disciplinary practices

Many complainants reported being subjected to harsh disciplinary practices by older or more ‘senior’ recruits or apprentices with actual or apprehended positions of authority and the ability to administer punishments. For example, one complainant who served at HMAS Leeuwin in the late 1960s described that junior recruits were effectively subjected to three different types of punishment. However, only one of these was an official or authorised punishment, and the others were unofficial:

Three punishment systems operate during any day. The first is official punishment. Called MUPS (Men Under Punishment), it’s awarded for the smallest infringement of any rules, and results in my running the quadrangle with a .303 above my head for two hours, after copping whacks across the calf muscles by the Gunnery Instructor’s move-along-canes as I collect said .303 from its gun rack. We do this instead of sport. The second is unofficial punishment. This comes from the supervising sailors. If I piss off the supervisor for the tiniest of reasons, I’m often made to run the quadrangle during the night, bare-footed in my pyjamas. Their worst punishment is when I’m forced to empty my locker, packing the entire contents into my five by two foot sea kit-bag and doubling around the quadrangle with the kitbag above my head. Boys that have come from rather protected family home environments and are extremely modest cop unbelievably degrading abuse at the hands of these sadistic sailors. These unfortunates, forced to double around the quadrangle for hours in the early morning in nothing more than their underpants, become crushed from embarrassment. This unofficial punishment usually happens before and after the training staff’s and the base official work hours of 0800 and 1730. Absolutely Stalinesque, the Duty Able Seamen in charge of the dorm blocks have absolute power until 0800 hours the following day and some wield it with relish. … The last form of punishment takes place after lights-out each evening. … [T]his last type of punishment inflicted by the recruits themselves surpasses everything else in cruelty.217

Complainants told the Taskforce of being instructed by more senior recruits or apprentices to undertake activities such as ‘duck-waddling’ exercises and ‘slack drills’, including being made to run with full kit or bedding strapped to their backs, or made to carry tyres, fire hoses or rifles above their heads in the middle of the night and often in cold temperatures.218 Other complainants spoke about being made to complete laps around the parade ground until they ‘dropped’,219 resulting in exhaustion and vomiting.220 Some complainants reported being subjected to punishment through ‘kangaroo courts’, an informal practice whereby a number of (usually more senior) recruits or apprentices arranged themselves in an informal forum resembling a court and delivered punishment to more junior members in the form of bullying, violent or abusive behaviours.

Many complainants told the Taskforce of being administered punishments for arbitrary reasons. This included experiencing beatings for minor infractions or when tasks were deemed not to have been completed to the satisfaction of a more senior recruit or trainee. For example, one complainant who served at HMAS Nirimba in the early 1970s was beaten after being instructed to sweep the street with a small broom as punishment for turning a light on after ‘lights out’.221 A complainant who was at HMAS Cerberus told the Taskforce that two recruits ‘were charged with theft because they had one grey sock which didn’t belong to them in their sock drawer because they mixed up their socks in the laundry by mistake’.222

(v) Harassment and bullying by members of staff

Of the 328 complainants who experienced abuse during initial recruit or employment training in the Navy at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 147 complainants experienced harassment and bullying by members of staff at these establishments.
While a number of complaints involved harassment and bullying by members of staff at HMAS Nirimba, HMAS Cerberus and HMAS Creswell, the vast majority of these complaints involved abuse that occurred at HMAS Leeuwin, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s. Similar incidents of abuse continued into the 1980s at the other establishments. However, as complainants’ experiences of harassment and bullying by staff overall mirror the experiences of HMAS Leeuwin complainants, material in this section of the report has largely been drawn from the Taskforce Report on abuse at HMAS Leeuwin.

In many cases, harassment and bullying involved verbal abuse and other forms of intimidating behaviour by staff members, such as being screamed at in a derogatory manner. Individuals undertaking initial recruit and employment training reported that this was one of their first experiences upon arriving at the training establishments. For example, one complainant who served at HMAS Leeuwin in the late 1960s told the Taskforce:

> When we arrived off the bus the abuse started straight away. Our superiors were pulling and pushing us into line and saying things to the effect of “your mother is a whore” and “your mother must be a bitch to whelp something like you” and so on. It was in my experience the first sorting-out step. They were basically trying to upset us and make us cry.

Numerous complainants told the Taskforce of having experienced harassment and bullying by staff members in the form of harsh training and disciplinary practices. In some cases, the training and disciplinary practices reported as abusive by complainants were permitted and considered acceptable in a training context. Naval regulations at the time permitted a variety of disciplinary practices which included, for example, regulations dealing with stoppage of leave or pay, extra hours of work or drill, or dismissal. However, as described in many complainants’ accounts, the manner in which they were carried out in these training contexts, their excessive duration or other factors, meant that these practices went beyond what was reasonable for 15 to 17 year old boys still undergoing physical and emotional development.

Complainants reported being made to march at double time, run, jog, perform ‘bunny-hops’ or duck-waddle around the parade ground for prolonged periods of time – often in very hot temperatures or late at night, and often carrying a heavy rifle or a mattress overhead for hours at a time. One complainant explained how this kind of behaviour was encouraged by staff, and, in some cases, carried out for no reason other than ‘the amusement of staff and other recruits’. Another complainant who served at HMAS Cerberus in the early 1960s told the Taskforce:

> I was forced to roll up and lash my hammock and then carry it around my neck horseshoe style and to double march from the junior recruit regulating office to the west gate and return. To ensure I went all the way [I think from memory around 1.5 mile return], the [senior sailor] rode his bike alongside me yelling at me all the way. ... [On another occasion he] ordered me to get my foam mattress and double to the west gate. He again rode alongside me on his push bike. He berated me all the way. I collapsed on the way back. I was assisted to my dorm.

Complainants reported that as a result of being forced to participate in such practices, recruits and apprentices collapsed from exhaustion, bled, vomited, passed out or suffered physical injuries.

Some complainants reported that on occasion their entire group or division was made to undergo such practices as punishment because one individual had performed poorly or failed to meet required standards. Other complainants reported being ordered by staff to continue general duties or perform unreasonable tasks when suffering from illness or serious injury, or singled out for this reason and verbally abused or publicly belittled.

Some complainants reported being subjected to unofficial punishments by staff members at night, often when staff had returned from being out drinking alcohol. For example, complainants reported being woken in the middle of the night and made to move piles of rocks around the parade ground, or being made to scrub toilets with toothbrushes. One complainant stated that supervisors would return from the bar ‘in varying states of drunkenness’, and if the junior recruits played up, they would assemble them outside in their pyjamas, regardless of the time or the weather.
16.5 Complaints of abuse during regular service in the Navy

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 861 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse within the Navy (39 per cent of all cases), experienced by more than 650 complainants. Many of these cases involved abuse experienced by complainants during regular service in the Navy, after having completed initial recruit and employment training and while employed in positions on base or on deployment.

It is important to note that the Taskforce has categorised the abuse experienced by each complainant as forming one or more ‘cases’ of abuse. Many complainants experienced multiple cases of abuse. One case generally relates to abuse experienced at one location (occasionally abuse experienced over a number of locations may be classed as one case of abuse if it is part of an ongoing campaign of abuse). The discussion of abuse throughout this section generally refers to the number of complainants, or individuals, who experienced a particular type or form of abuse during their time in the Navy.

The Taskforce conducted a close review of complaints received by 199 complainants which raised at least one plausible allegation of abuse that occurred during regular service at the following locations: HMAS Cerberus (45 complainants), HMAS Kuttabul (29 complainants), HMAS Albatross (24 complainants), HMAS Stirling (16 complainants), HMAS Creswell (11 complainants), and HMAS Nirimba (six complainants); and on the following ships: HMAS Sydney III (20 complainants), HMAS Melbourne II (14 complainants), HMAS Success II (14 complainants), HMAS Perth II (13 complainants), HMAS Brisbane II (11 complainants), HMAS Sydney IV (nine complainants), and HMAS Adelaide II (eight complainants). A number of complainants experienced abuse at more than one of these locations.

The summary below is based on information provided by the 199 complainants who were undertaking regular Navy service at these locations. It is important to note that where figures are given, they only relate to complaints of abuse experienced by people during regular Navy service at these locations. These figures do not represent the total number of complaints received by the Taskforce regarding abuse that occurred during regular Navy service. Rather, they are used to represent trends and patterns in the abuse that has occurred over time.

Complainants in regular service at these locations most commonly reported experiencing harassment and bullying (116 complainants), followed by sexual abuse (90 complainants), physical abuse (70 complainants), and sexual harassment (55 complainants). The first case of abuse originated in the early 1950s and the last was reported to have occurred in 2011.

The overwhelming majority of complainants who experienced abuse in regular service were men. However, a significant number of complainants who experienced abuse were women (40 per cent of complainants), which is particularly concerning given that women currently comprise approximately 19 per cent of total naval personnel. Of particular note is that female complainants were more likely to have experienced sexual abuse or sexual harassment in more recent years than their male counterparts.

A significant number of the complainants who experienced abuse were young, aged less than 21 years at the time of the abuse, and were of a junior rank, such as a Seaman or Able Seaman. Some of these complainants had also experienced abuse during their time in recruit or employment training. Of particular significance was the age of complainants who were sexually assaulted, with over three quarters stating that they were under 21 years of age at the time of the abuse.

Almost all complainants reported that they were abused by a member of the Navy who was of equivalent rank or who held a higher rank to them, and a number of complainants reported that they were abused by senior officers, including Commanders and Captains. Some complainants told the Taskforce that the alleged abusers used their rank to enable the abuse, such as by coercing involvement in sexual activity, ordering participation in physical activity against medical advice, or directing the completion of unreasonable tasks.

Complainants told the Taskforce that they were abused after hours, such as while socialising or asleep, and also in the workplace during their regular work hours. Complainants who experienced abuse in the workplace said that this abuse often included explicitly offensive and derogatory verbal abuse. Some complainants reported being physically assaulted in view of others, and a number of female complainants spoke about being subjected to uninvited touching, groping and sexually explicit verbal abuse in the workplace.
Complainants who experienced abuse outside official work hours reported that alcohol was frequently a factor connected to the abuse. It was apparent from complainants’ accounts that some complainants were targeted because of their state of inebriation at the time of the abuse. In other complaints, alleged abusers were described as intoxicated at the time of the abuse.

Complainants frequently told the Taskforce that they were targeted for abuse because of certain attributes which marked them out as ‘different’, which included their gender, age, perceived weakness, and workplace performance. Many complainants also reported that they were targeted as a result of illness or injury, often labelled a ‘malingering’, being accused of faking their injury and at times being ordered to continue activity despite medical restrictions or after clearly articulating that it caused them pain and distress.

The sections below provide a summary of the main types of abuse experienced during regular service at the Navy locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce.

[a] Sexual abuse during regular service in the Navy

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 379 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual abuse within the Navy (44 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Navy).

Of the 199 complainants who experienced abuse during regular Navy service at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 90 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual abuse (45 per cent of complaints reviewed).

The incidence of sexual abuse reported by complainants across the decades remained consistent, apart from a noticeable spike in the 1970s. However, it is of particular note that there was a shift in the gender of complainants who reported sexual abuse occurring after the 1980s, from which time female complainants were reportedly subjected to sexual abuse more frequently than male complainants. In most cases of sexual abuse reported to the Taskforce, the alleged abusers were male.

The nature of the sexual abuse experienced by complainants during regular service in the Navy is discussed below, including sexual assault, indecent assault, as well as other forms of sexual abuse.

[i] Sexual assault

Sexual assault was the most commonly reported form of sexual abuse experienced by complainants during regular service in the Navy (50 complainants). In most cases involving sexual assault, the alleged abuser was male and was of either equivalent or higher rank to the complainant. Complainants reported sexual assault carried out by both individual and multiple abusers. The types of sexual assault reported included actual or attempted non-consensual anal and vaginal penetration by an alleged abuser’s penis, digital penetration, and being forced to give and receive oral sex.

The Taskforce received a number of complaints involving sexual assault of women during regular service in the Navy from the late 1960s up until the late 2000s (12 complainants). In the majority of these cases, female complainants were sexually assaulted by an individual male alleged abuser (eight complainants). The number of female complainants who experienced sexual assault was consistent over the time period considered by the Taskforce, with the exception of a noticeable increase in reports of sexual assault that occurred during the 1990s (six complainants).

Most complainants who experienced sexual assault during regular service in the Navy were particularly young and vulnerable at the time of the abuse. The majority of complainants were under 21 years of age at the time of abuse (42 complainants). In almost half of the cases of sexual assault reported to the Taskforce, complainants were under 18 years of age at the time of the abuse (23 complainants), with most of these complainants aged 16 or 17 years old. As a result of their youth, it was not uncommon for a complainant to report having been sexually assaulted by a member of the Navy employed at a higher rank or in a significant position of authority. For example, one complainant reported that he was sexually assaulted in the late 1960s while he was a 16 year old Seaman. The complainant told the Taskforce that he was anally penetrated by an officer after being invited into the officer’s cabin to drink beer.
When it was time to depart, the three of us had to arise early the next morning for duty, we were made to leave the cabin together. As we were exiting [the officer] took hold of my wrist and said "not you" ... and retained a hold on my wrist. When alone he pulled down my work trousers [number 8's] and my underwear which were white Navy issue boxers. I was bent over and he was behind me, reaching around fondling my genitals with his right hand. He then forced his penis into my rectum and kept tugging at my penis. I felt panic and burning pain. It seemed to go on and on but in fact must have been only for a matter of minutes. If he said anything to me, I cannot recall what it was.234

The Taskforce received a number of complaints which involved alleged abusers who deliberately used their higher rank and positions of authority to coerce complainants into sexual activity.235 For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that he was 'ordered' to perform oral sex on an officer before the officer would arrange for his transfer to another base.236 Other complainants told the Taskforce of circumstances in which senior members of the Navy abused their positions of authority in order to carry out an incident of sexual assault. For example, one complainant who was ranked a Seaman and serving on a ship in the early 1990s, reported that he was ordered into the room of an officer, supposedly on the pretence of administering punishment for having returned to the ship intoxicated. The complainant told the Taskforce:

[The officer] castigated me for the [intoxicated] condition I was in. My mate tried to tell him we were alright and that we did not need any help. He was trying to protect me. [The officer] ordered him to leave and said that he would take care of me. [The officer's] room was at the top of the stairs which led to our sleeping mess. He ordered me into his room and then locked the door. In his cabin he attempted to have oral sex with me and then brutally raped me. I found out later that [the officer] had a reputation on the ship for sexually molesting junior sailors.237

Complainants’ reports of sexual assault often included aggravating factors that exacerbated the already traumatic experience. These included the involvement of multiple abusers,238 associated acts of physical violence,239 and repeated instances of sexual abuse.240 In some cases, complainants were subjected to some or all of these factors at the same time. A number of complainants reported being sexually assaulted by multiple abusers, often in circumstances that were described as being particularly violent. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce of a particularly distressing experience that occurred in the early 1980s, during which he was sexually assaulted both anally and orally on multiple occasions, while a knife was held to his throat:

As I headed to my cabin, two other [sailors] invited me into their cabin for a drink. ... After entering, one gave me a drink and all seemed ok. Within minutes the pair had assaulted and overpowered me, one had a knife at my throat/head and said if I fought/resisted he’d cut me. They then proceeded to sexually assault me. One penetrating anally, the other orally, before swapping, all the time the knife close to my throat.

The next occasion was the same block, same level ... both men anally penetrated me, a further two assaults took place.241

Female complainants in particular reported sexual assaults during which they were forcibly restrained, or overpowered by male abusers.242 For example, one complainant described being overpowered and physically restrained by alleged abusers who acted as a 'team' during a sexual assault:

I was raped and indecently assaulted by three sailors. ... I worked with all of the perpetrators on the base in the Wardroom (officer’s mess). ... The men followed me from the sailors club on the base and attacked me on the base oval when I was returning to the women’s quarters. ... The men acted as a team and held me down while they took turns to repeatedly rape and indecently assault me. They put their penises into my mouth. I was also punched in the face which resulted in [significant injuries]. The men did not use any protection [condoms] during the rapes. I was a virgin at the time of the crime.243

A number of complainants reported having been intoxicated at the time of the abuse, and a small number of complainants reported that their drink was spiked prior to being sexually assaulted.244 Complainants frequently reported having been in bed sleeping off the effects of their inebriation and waking to find that they were being sexually assaulted.245 For example, one complainant reported:

We began drinking, and there was a lot of vodka and alcohol available. I passed out in the [officer’s] dayroom lounge, having consumed too much vodka. I am not sure how long I was unconscious for, but when I woke I found that my shorts were around my ankles and my shirt was bunched up under my arms. My anus felt stretched and sore. I realised that [the officer] had anally raped me.246
Another complainant told the Taskforce of having been sexually assaulted in the late 1990s:

On that day at around mid-afternoon I went back to my cabin as I had had a bit to drink and thought it was time to pack it in. ... I remember [an Able Seaman] coming over to me, grabbing me and trying to kiss me. I kept saying "NO, I have a boyfriend you know that!" I kept repeating "NO, NO, NO!"

The next thing I remember was on my back in my bedroom floor with [the Able Seaman] on top of me. His penis was inside my vagina and performing the act of sex. I kept pushing him away saying "No, No!" I remember crying. I tried to push him away saying "Oh my god, oh my god." He fixed himself up, hugged me, and said "Let's never talk about this again or tell anyone." I was still crying and he left.247

A number of complaints of sexual abuse involved sexual assault during a hazing or initiation activity. This type of abuse occurred at a number of locations, particularly on ships. This is discussed in more detail in section 16.6(c).

(ii) Indecent assault

[I] was confronted by a [Leading Seaman] a very big bloke, who went for it and tossed me up against a bank of lockers really violently. ... I was out cold for maybe one to two minutes. ... When I came to he was standing over me with his cock in his hand and was trying to rub it on my face.248

A considerable number of complainants reported being indecently assaulted during regular service in the Navy [31 male complainants and 11 female complainants]. A significant number of male complainants experienced this form of abuse between the 1960s and the 1980s. Most female complainants experienced this form of abuse after the 1980s, and there was an increase in complaints relating to indecent assault of women during the 2000s. Many incidents of indecent assault were carried out by individuals in considerable positions of authority.249

Male complainants typically experienced acts of indecent assault carried out by a male abuser in a position of seniority, such as a member of the Navy holding a superior rank or employed in a supervisory capacity. Complainants described being rubbed against by an alleged abuser’s body,250 having their genitals ‘grabbed’,251 and one complainant who told the Taskforce that he was made to shower with the Captain of the ship and ‘rub soap all over him’.252 Another complainant experienced ongoing sexual abuse by a Petty Officer during the late 1960s:

[The Petty Officer] would come into the mess when other members were at their duties and grab me from behind. He would squeeze my nipples and put his hand down my shorts and grab my testicles both in a violent manner. While he was doing this he would be sticking his tongue in my ear and trying to kiss me. He would also be making disgusting comments. This particular behaviour went on about two or three times a week.253

The Taskforce received a number of reports from male complainants who were subjected to forced masturbation or ejaculated on by others.256

A number of complainants reported having been indecently assaulted by a group of alleged abusers.255 For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

I was a very young looking 17 year old ... drafted to my first ship posting. I was always being told that once the ship had sailed for more than three days at sea, I was legally theirs for the taking. They would usually threaten and scare the wits out of me by conducting a count down, then saying on the third day it’s legal for them to touch me. ... At first I did not believe them, however they seemed pretty convincing, so convincing that I thought they were going strip off my overalls, sexually abuse or even rape me. I became very frightened, fearful and emotionally upset. Then they would just laugh at me and say that it was my lucky day and let me carry on with my rounds. ... There were many occasions were [another sailor] would reach out and grab the hairs from right under my arse through my coveralls. ... This happened on numerous occasions.

I can recall a time where a Petty Officer and a Leading Seaman grabbed me, tied me up to a main engine stop valve and started to strip off my coveralls. ... I remember screaming and yelling at them to stop.259
Female complainants who experienced indecent assault between the 1970s and 1990s often reported having been indecently assaulted during work hours in full view of others. Many of these complainants reported being inappropriately touched by male peers and co-workers,257 ‘rubbed against’,258 or having their breasts ‘grabbed’.259 For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

[I] had to put up with men rubbing themselves up against [my] body and putting their hands down [my] overalls when we were working in tight spaces, I even sewed up my overall pockets.257

Other complainants reported having another sailor’s genitals placed on their body. This included one complainant who told the Taskforce of standing at ease during muster with her hands placed behind her back, and having the male sailors lined up behind her push their genitals into her hands.261

More recent complaints of indecent assault experienced by female complainants involved unwanted sexual advances, including being touched on the inside of the thigh,262 slapped on the buttocks,263 or repeated attempts at being kissed without their consent.

(iii) Other forms of sexual abuse

A number of complainants also reported being subjected to other forms of sexual abuse. This included being forced to strip naked,264 having colleagues expose their genitals,265 or having photographs taken while they were showering.266 Some complainants reported being forced to participate in humiliating and degrading acts, often involving acts of indecent exposure or public nakedness.

One complainant reported a particularly public and humiliating experience in the late 1990s, during which he was stripped naked, tied to a broom stick and had his pubic hair shaved:

The next thing I knew, my overalls were forcibly removed, and my wrists were cabled tied to a broomstick and I was placed into a position on my back naked, on deck plates. ... From there abuse occurred for the remainder of the watch.267

(b) Sexual harassment during regular service in the Navy

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 147 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual harassment within the Navy (17 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Navy).

Of the 199 complainants who experienced abuse during regular Navy service at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 55 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual harassment (28 per cent of complaints reviewed).

Despite the relatively low incidence of sexual harassment complaints to the Taskforce, this type of abuse is likely to have been much more prevalent within the Navy than is indicated by the statistics, for a number of reasons. This is largely because many complaints of sexual abuse may have included behaviour that could also have been categorised as sexual harassment.

There are significant differences in the sexual harassment experienced by women and men in the Navy. Women reported sexual harassment occurring from the 1970s to 2011, with the number of incidents of sexual harassment increasing by decade, reaching a peak in the 1990s and 2000s. The number of female complainants who reported that they experienced sexual harassment in 2011 is four times the number who reported that they experienced sexual harassment in the 1970s.

Female complainants told the Taskforce of experiencing unwanted sexual advances, sexually explicit verbal abuse, indecent exposure and a range of discriminatory and derogatory practices throughout the duration of their careers in the Navy.

Female complainants described the Navy as both a ‘very sexually charged environment’268 where female sailors were considered ‘new meat’,269 and as harbouring a discriminatory and degrading attitude where male sailors ‘were hostile to the presence of women’.270 As expressed by one complainant, women ‘were considered scum’.271 Many complainants told the Taskforce that sexually inappropriate behaviour was ‘recognised as culture and therefore acceptable’,272 and that such behaviour was condoned throughout the ranks of senior and supervising staff. As one complainant expressed, members of superior rank ‘did and said nothing. It was “open season” on female sailors’.273
Female complainants spoke of the lack of change or shower facilities specifically for women in some establishments and being required to share toilets and showers with men, and cubicles which did not have shower curtains or doors. One complainant described the facilities during the late 1980s as follows:

[O]ur change room was one of the old World War II huts is the best way to describe them. Dirty, hardly any curtains and just stuffed with rubbish and some lockers and freezing cold in winter and stinking hot in summer, not to mention mice, spiders etc. No privacy at all.

Female complainants consistently reported being subjected to unwelcome physical touching, including being pinched and slapped on the bottom, cornered in tight spaces and rubbed up against, having their breasts grabbed, and attempts by male colleagues to undo their buttons and rip open their uniforms. One complainant told the Taskforce of an incident during which a number of male colleagues attempted to put their tongues into her ear.

Some female complainants reported being subjected to male colleagues exposing their genitals. Complainants reported witnessing male sailors masturbate in front of them, and witnessing male sailors undressing in front of them. One such complainant told the Taskforce that at HMAS Cerberus in the late 1980s:

I was sitting at the desk doing work when a Petty Officer came into the room and stood over at the next table. He did not acknowledge me, but proceeded to pull a pornographic magazine out of the drawer (which should not have been there, as it was only me and [another] WRAN working in the office at all times) and placed it on the desk in front of him. He started to flick through the magazine and then pulled his penis out and started to masturbate near where I was sitting. When I noticed what he was doing – and saw he had an erection – I immediately got up and went outside. I paced up and down the landing area for ages before returning to my office. I was anxious that I had been gone for so long that the Petty Officer would report me from being absent and I would incur an [Absent Without Official Leave] charge. ... When I returned, he was gone and I vomited, being sickened by his behaviour. I felt it was a deliberate act to offend me.

A number of female complainants told the Taskforce of unwelcome sexual advances and propositions for sex, particularly during their day to day work, and reported being asked by male colleagues to give sexual favours in return for promotions. For example, one complainant asked her supervising officer why she had not been promoted and was told it was because she ‘must not be blowing the right people’ before he gestured towards his genitals, and another complainant was told by two male peers that the only reason she was promoted was because of what was ‘between [her] legs’. Another complainant told the Taskforce of being told by a Commander in the late 1990s, ‘I think all you need is some good sex and I am just the person to give it to you’. Complainants reported having men turn up at their doors asking for sex, and notes being left on their doors advertising sex. One complainant told the Taskforce that her superior officer would offer other sailors money to have sex with her while they lined up for their meals, while other complainants told the Taskforce of female sailors being subjected to polls and competitions on which male sailors would have sex with them first.

Another complainant told the Taskforce of a ‘gronk and shame’ book in the ship’s mess where men recorded their sexual exploits with female sailors, and other female complainants reported malicious rumours being spread about their sexual history.

A number of female complainants reported photographs being taken of them in varying states of nudity, often while taking a shower. For example, one complainant was made to have an x-ray which was then passed around to the men on base so they could look at her breasts.

Many female complainants told the Taskforce of having lewd and indecent cartoons and images as well as pornographic calendars, pictures and posters displayed in the workplace. Other complainants reported being subjected to demeaning practical jokes, such as having Vegemite or grease smeared over toilet seats. One complainant told the Taskforce of witnessing male sailors pouring tomato sauce over wet tampons and throwing them into the ladies change rooms, as well as regularly entering the ladies toilets where they would wrap the toilet seats with glad wrap.
Complaints of sexual harassment of males covered a wide range of behaviours including unwelcome physical touching, indecent exposure and sexual comments and taunts. Some male complainants told the Taskforce of incidents taking place in public forums, such as the shower blocks or the mess hall, with the intention of humiliating them. Several complainants reported having photographs taken of them while naked or partially naked and then circulated amongst other sailors. Male complainants also spoke of unwelcome sexual advances and propositions for anal or oral sex, and being asked to masturbate other sailors while showering. Other male complainants reported being called terms such as ‘queers’ or ‘a fucking faggot’. Complainants also reported sexual taunts, for example being told by a Chief Petty Officer in response to a question, that ‘you can suck my cock or else’. Other male complainants reported being exposed to pornography in the form of magazines and films.

A number of male complainants reported incidents where other sailors exposed their genitals. Complainants told the Taskforce they were required to witness other members of Navy exposing their penis, sometimes on multiple occasions. Another complainant described being asked by fellow sailors whether he had ever seen a ‘white elephant’. He was made to close his eyes, and when he opened them, saw that one of the other sailors had the white pockets of his overalls hanging out to represent the ears and his penis hanging out to represent the trunk of the elephant.

Male complainants often reported sexual harassment carried out by those in considerable positions of authority and positions of seniority to the complainant. This included Chief Petty Officers, Chief Coxswains, Lieutenants, and Captains. For example, one complainant who experienced sexual harassment during the early 1970s told the Taskforce:

On four occasions I went to the Captain’s night cabin to wake him and he had the sheets turned down below his hips with an erection showing above the bedding. On the fourth occasion he told me his valet in his previous command allowed himself to be used for sex.

(c) Physical abuse during regular service in the Navy

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 464 cases as raising plausible allegations of physical abuse within the Navy (54 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Navy).

Of the 199 complainants who experienced abuse during regular Navy service at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 70 complainants reported having been subjected to physical abuse (35 per cent of complaints reviewed).

The numbers of complainants who experienced physical abuse varied across the time period considered by the Taskforce, with the highest numbers of abuse during the 1970s and 1990s. Some complainants reported being as young as 16 and 17 years old at the time of the abuse, having experienced abuse immediately following completion of their initial recruit or employment training. Most of the complainants who experienced physical abuse were male, though the Taskforce also received reports of physical abuse experienced by a small number of female complainants (eight complainants).

Complainants told the Taskforce of being subjected to a range of physically abusive conduct for a number of reasons. Some complainants described experiencing random acts of violence during unprovoked attacks, as well as being met with physical resistance for challenging authority. The Taskforce received reports of physical abuse instigated as a consequence of jealousy over a complainant’s promotion, jealousy over a complainant’s relationship with another peer, mistaken identity where an alleged abuser had intended to punch somebody else, or simply on account of an alleged abuser’s dislike towards the complainant.

Many complainants experienced physical abuse in addition to other types of abuse, particularly harassment and bullying and sexual abuse.

The nature of the physical abuse experienced by complainants during regular service in the Navy is discussed below. This includes physical assault, threats of violence, physical constraint, as well as physical abuse carried out in the context of initiation rituals, and physical abuse related to illness or injury.
(i) Physical assault

On days when I could take no more I would find a hidey hole on the Ship and stay there, sometimes for up to 24 hours. I was scared stiff.321

The types of physical assault experienced by complainants were consistent across the time period considered by the Taskforce. Complainants reported being bashed,322 head-butted,323 as well as having attempts made by other sailors to throw them overboard.326 A number of complainants reported being attacked in bed while sleeping, including being hit with a broomstick handle,325 attacked with a screwdriver,326 or having their bed tipped over such that they sustained injuries when they fell to the ground.327

A number of complainants told the Taskforce that physical assault was often used as a means of intimidation by supervisors or members of superior rank, as a means of displaying authority, or in response to alleged mistakes. Some complainants reported ongoing campaigns of abuse by their supervisors.328 This included being elbowed and kicked while working,329 pushed against walls,330 picked up or grabbed by the throat,331 and being punched in head, chest, shoulder and stomach knocking them to the ground.332

Many complainants reported experiencing punishments for mistakes or perceived wrongdoing or minor misdemeanours. For example, one complainant was hit with wet tennis balls for bringing alcohol back to base.333

A number of complainants described incidents where they were physically abused by other sailors who were ordered by supervising officers to ‘sort [them] out’334 or ‘give [them] a beating’.335

Complainants reported that they often experienced physical abuse in the context of particularly violent sexual acts, including being kicked and punched in the head, body and genitals in the lead up to an act of sexual abuse.336 One complainant reported being tossed up against a bank of lockers causing him to fall unconscious and waking up to find an alleged abuser trying to rub his penis in the complainant’s face.337 Other complainants were bashed and threatened to be thrown overboard before being forced to perform oral sex on an alleged abuser,338 or punched in the stomach before being forced to anally penetrate an alleged abuser.339

A number of complainants were subjected to particularly violent acts of sexual abuse, including one complainant who had a bottle inserted into his anus.340 Another complainant told the Taskforce of an incident that occurred during the early 1970s:

I was asleep in bed in the sleeping barracks … when I was attacked by four sailors in the middle of the night. … I was kicked and punched repeatedly. … After the bashing, [one of the sailors] raped me in the presence of the other three. I was still somewhat cloudy because of the blows to the head when he raped me. I was not able to stop him. As well as being hurt from the physical beating, he was a much bigger and heavier man than I was. … When he had finished, he tore my mouth open and threatened me that I was not to mention that this had ever happened to anyone or there would be repercussions against me. There were other people in the room asleep but they apparently never saw or heard anything. I was left for dead once they had finished with me. I was rendered unconscious in the vicious assault. …

When this had finished and they had left, I finally came around. I struggled to get out of bed and to the base hospital. It was about half a mile from the sleeping barracks and somehow I managed to walk myself there. I entered the hospital, was admitted and given a bed. I was in hospital at [the base] for a couple of weeks after these incidents. I was black and blue all over and in a lot of pain.341

(ii) Threats of violence

A number of complainants reported being subjected to frequent and serious threats of physical abuse and violence. This included being threatened with bashings or threats to be thrown overboard,342 and threats to be killed or seriously injured if they made a report of the abuse experienced.343 Other complainants told the Taskforce of experiencing conduct which caused them to fear for their personal safety.344
For example, one complainant told the Taskforce about ongoing harassment and bullying carried out by his direct supervising officer:

[He] was very intimidating and would always make comments about what he would like to do with me such as “I can’t wait for you to get hung up on some live wires. So that I can beat you up with a lump of four by two.” By this time I was extremely nervous around all sailors but what could I do?345

(iii) Physical constraint

Some complainants reported being locked in tight spaces as practical jokes by other sailors, such as being locked in a spin dryer.346 One complainant told the Taskforce that in the early 1990s she was pushed into a freezer and locked inside:

About six weeks into my posting I was cleaning the ice out from the bottom of a chest freezer ... when [two Able Seamen] came up from behind me, grabbed my feet and tipped me into the freezer. They closed the lid and sat on top so that I could not get out. I was terrified. I did not know how long I would be in there for and began to panic. I was screaming and banging on the lid of the freezer. I was extremely distraught.347

(iv) Physical abuse during initiation rituals

The Taskforce received a number of complaints regarding physical abuse in the context of initiation rituals on ships [see further section 16.6(c) below]. During these incidents, complainants were often forcibly constrained and subjected to a range of physically and sexually abusive conduct. Many of these complainants described how members of senior rank were present during these ceremonies and participated as witnesses or were often involved in carrying out the abuse experienced by junior sailors.348

Complainants described being beaten with rubber batons,349 taped to metal polls,350 and drenched under a fire hydrant.351 Other complainants told the Taskforce of being forced to participate in rituals, including the ‘tradition’ of the ‘Crossing the Line’ ceremony. For example, one complainant described his experience during the late 1980s as follows:

The ceremony involved new sailors who were yet to cross the equator to be brought before a mock court of “King Neptune” and his “wife”. Senior sailors aboard [the ship] played the part of King Neptune and his wife. Everyone was involved in the ceremony, including [senior officers]. ... The bears were played by senior sailors that had attained the rank of Leading Seaman or above. At the time I remember thinking that I had little or no choice and it was best to get it over and done with, without a fuss. ...

... New sailors were brought before King Neptune. They were made to kneel before King Neptune and were then covered with a slimey concoction and had a mustard like substance squirted into their mouths. I was advised that the slime contained urine, faeces and also sperm that had been fermented in the main galley for some time prior to the ceremony. ... The bears were dressed in hessian sacks, underpants and had flour sacks with holes cut in them as hoods. When my name was called, I appeared before Neptune and was made to kneel before him. He read out the charge of “crossing the line without permission”. Several bears started to beat me with rubber batons and I was covered in the slime. This happened to everyone else as well. ... Suddenly, one or more of the bears grabbed me from behind and pushed me onto the deck. They forcibly removed my clothing. I was stripped naked in front of at least 100 members of the crew [both junior and senior sailors were present]. Lots of the crew members had cameras and at least one person had a video camera. I felt sure at this time that I was about to be sexually assaulted or raped by multiple people. I was terrified for my safety. ... I was in such a frightened and irrational state that I even considered jumping overboard to get away.352

Another complainant told the Taskforce:

... I experienced [my] first Crossing the Line ceremony. [I was] beaten by “Bears”, repetitively dunked upside down by “Bears” in a wheelie bin with rotten food and had my head forcibly held under water for extended periods in a temporarily assembled pool on [the] quarterdeck of [the] ship whilst [my] hands were secured behind my back. Bears are more senior sailors usually Leading Seaman dress[ed] with hoods (hessian potato sacks). If you tried to hide from them this would lead to worse things happening. [This was] fully endorsed and witness[ed] by senior sailors. This happened to most junior personnel on board unless the person ... asked the divisional senior sailor to be left out, if this was done, severe ridicule would follow.353
One complainant told the Taskforce of experiencing physical abuse while he was a spectator of a Crossing the Line ceremony in the early 1990s:

My turn to be “charged” came shortly thereafter. As is customary, numerous “Bears” accosted me and half dragged me to the container of slime. I offered no resistance. I was hit numerous times with rubber insulation hosing and given a “shampoo”. The slime stung my eyes and I was unable to open them properly for the next few minutes.

I was then presented to King Neptune and I knelt on the deck in front of him whilst the “charges” were read out to the ship’s company. ... As the charges were read out the crowd cheered and jeered. Although this is also customary, I was not expecting the string of charges which made quite clear that I was professionally incompetent, my personal standing in the ship was very poor and that the ship’s company were openly disrespectful towards me. ...

Throughout the reading of the charges against me, members of the ship’s company cheered loudly and jeered. ... At the height of the crowd response ... I was struck from behind with a heavy object which hit the back of my neck, knocking me to the ground and knocking the wind out of me. ... Upon seeing this, the crowd then cheered in what I would describe as a frenzied manner.354

(v) Physical abuse related to illness or injury

Some complainants reported a negative attitude towards illness and injury by members of higher rank, and experienced physical abuse in the form of ordered activity while under medical restriction.355 Other complainants reported physical abuse in the context of a failure to provide access to medical treatment, including a complainant who reported being forbidden by her supervisor to seek medical treatment after a bucket of boiling water spilled onto her arm.356

(d) Harassment and bullying during regular service in the Navy

Later while serving ... I had terrible nightmares and flashbacks and the treatment aboard that ship was disgusting and only served to reinforce my self fear and loathing, on more than one occasion I thought of jumping over the side to escape my tormentors.357

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 539 cases as raising plausible allegations of harassment and bullying within the Navy (63 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Navy).

Of the 199 complainants who experienced abuse during regular Navy service at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 116 complainants reported having been subjected to harassment and bullying while they were in regular service in the Navy (58 per cent of complaints reviewed). The numbers of complainants who experienced harassment and bullying during periods of regular service in the Navy was spread fairly evenly across the 1950s to 2011, with no decade standing out as having a particularly high number of incidents of abuse.

Complainants reported that they experienced harassment and bullying during regular service when they were a variety of ages and ranks. Several complainants were 16 years old when they were subjected to harassment and bullying, often during their first posting after completing initial recruit and employment training.358 Other complainants reported experiencing harassment and bullying much later in their careers and while employed in positions of considerable seniority within the naval employment hierarchy.

A number of complainants stated that they were employed at the same rank as their alleged abusers. In some of these cases, complainants experienced harassment and bullying across multiple naval locations, carried out by the same recruits or apprentices who had first abused them during their initial training, and who also transferred across to the same naval base upon commencing their careers in regular service.359

However, the vast majority of complainants told the Taskforce that the abuse they experienced was typically carried out by direct supervisors, training instructors or individuals in considerable positions of authority over them. This had particular implications for complainants, effectively denying them an avenue to report the abuse, as their alleged abusers were those directly in their chain of command. A number of complainants reported being subjected to harassment and bullying by particularly high ranking officers, including Commanders.360 As one complainant who served on HMAS Sydney in the early 1970s described:

Every wrong doer held a rank and we were always taught never to question a decision made by higher ranking officers.361
Much of the harassment and bullying which occurred during regular service involved ongoing and sustained campaigns of abuse over a period of months and, in some cases, years. The abuse often occurred within a context of intimidation and victimisation by colleagues and supervisors, during which a range of abusive behaviours were carried out in tandem. Some complainants reported harassment and bullying in addition to other types of abuse, including physical abuse and sexual abuse.

As with complaints of abuse during initial training, complainants who experienced abuse in regular service told the Taskforce they were targeted for abuse because of certain attributes which marked them out as ‘different’. These ‘risk factors’ for abuse included the complainant’s gender (being female),362 age,363 perceived weakness,364 and workplace performance (both for excelling at their work365 and for perceived inadequacies in their work).366 Some complainants reported being targeted on account of their familial relationships with senior staff,367 or an alleged abuser’s jealousy over a promotion.368 In some cases, complainants experienced abuse simply because an alleged abuser took a personal disliking towards them.369 A number of complainants told the Taskforce that they were subjected to further harassment and bullying, often increasing in intensity, after making a formal report of the abuse they were experiencing to Defence.370

Complaints of harassment and bullying frequently involved references to alcohol. Complainants spoke of a ‘drinking culture’;371 with one complainant explaining that members of the Navy were ‘seasoned drinkers’ and Leading Seaman and Petty Officers ‘would use the power of their rank to ensure that there was a lot of drinking done’.372 Another complainant who served on HMAS Sydney in the late 1960s told the Taskforce:

[S]enior sailors would often drink to excess of an evening and then take great delight in tormenting whichever young sailor they had in for with the threat of further punishment if they dared to complain. Running kit musters, cleaning toilets with toothbrushes, scrubbing floors late at night or running from one end of the ship to the other or being given unachievable tasks was common place.373

The nature of the harassment and bullying experienced by complainants during regular service in the Navy is discussed below, including verbal abuse, unreasonable tasks and demands, interference with career progression, ostracism and social exclusion, and harassment and bullying related to illness or injury.

(i) Verbal abuse

On a daily basis I was told I was ‘fucking shit’, ‘a little mummies boy cunt’... it was not unusual to be threatened by [a Leading Seaman] five to ten times everyday. ... I had approached [senior sailors] about this and was told that it would be taken care of. [But] after I had told them both the abuse got worse.374

A large number of complaints to the Taskforce involved verbal taunting and public humiliation. Complainants reported being verbally abused by supervising staff and training instructors, and belittled in front of colleagues for both personal reasons and for alleged mistakes made during the course of their work.375 This included being called names and denigrated in front of colleagues, for example, being referred to as a ‘Seaman slut’,376 ‘worm’ and ‘rat’.377 Other complainants reported having profanities screamed at them on a regular basis during the course of their work.378

(ii) Unreasonable tasks and demands

A number of complainants reported being required to complete unreasonable tasks or demands by supervisors or members of higher rank. Complainants reported being assigned additional duties and tasks on top of their existing workload and often outside of their normal duties and hours of work. For example, complainants reported being forced to perform chores which could have been undertaken during the day throughout the night for a period of several weeks,379 or being required to work for 19 hours straight with only a half hour break.380 Complainants explained how this led to sleep deprivation and mental stress,381 or to formal disciplinary action when a complainant subsequently missed their next shift due to exhaustion.382

Complainants also told the Taskforce of being ordered to perform tasks seemingly unrelated to their work, including being instructed to smuggle food and alcohol on board,383 and being told to get a tattoo while on shore leave.384
Other complainants reported being instructed to perform meaningless or undesirable tasks, often for the entertainment of higher ranking staff. For example, one complainant who served on HMAS Sydney in the late 1960s told the Taskforce how an officer of superior rank:

[W]ould take great delight in making me suffer for his amusement. On one occasion he had me move approximately 100 drums of non-skid paint from one hanger to the other. The task could have been completed with a forklift in 10 minutes. Days later he made me move it back again. The drums of paint weighed 35kg each. ...

On another occasion the ships fresh water tanks needed cleaning and they called for volunteers this is a very dirty job in the bowels of the ship in a confined space. [He] volunteered me when I protested because I was fearful of closed spaces ... he told me I was a weak cunt and that if I did not comply he would charge me with disobeying a direct order.385

A number of complainants reported being subjected to excessively harsh or arbitrary disciplinary practices by their superiors for failing to perform tasks, or for perceived wrongdoing. Many complainants reported that their requests for leave would be denied,386 or that they would be spuriously charged with insubordination for disobeying an order which they reasonably believed to be unfair or unjust.387

(iii) Interference with career progression

Many complainants told the Taskforce that they were unreasonably denied opportunities for skills development and career advancement, such as training courses.388 Complainants reported how members of superior rank would interfere with their management decisions and areas of responsibility.389 A number of complainants reported deliberate attempts by supervisors to undermine their work or restrict their progression in the workplace by administering poor performance assessments or deliberately manipulating performance results. This included being pressured into signing off on ‘unfair’ performance assessments without the opportunity to rebut the comments made,390 and situations where their personal records were deliberately modified.391 Some complainants reported incidents where supervising staff encouraged others to give complainants lower than average workplace assessments,392 or would speak negatively about their skills and performance among peers and subordinates, questioning a complainant’s fitness for duties.393 Other complainants reported being falsely accused or charged with minor offences and misdemeanours, which would then appear on their permanent records and impact negatively on their chances for promotion.394

(iv) Ostracism and social exclusion

Complainants also told the Taskforce of being ostracised by their peers and excluded from social events.395 In some cases, supervising staff were directly responsible for instructing others to keep away from complainants,396 or forbidding complainants to speak to anyone else during work hours unless it was clearly for work purposes.397 Complainants also reported incidents where colleagues spread malicious rumours about their sexual history.398 Other complainants reported being shunned for ‘dobbing in’ a colleague after making a report of the abuse they experienced or after providing evidence against a colleague.399

(v) Harassment and bullying related to illness and injury

A number of complainants reported that they were harassed and bullied by their superiors and peers because of their physical limitations, within an environment which was hostile to the display of any illness or injury. Some complainants reported being faced with similar attitudes by sick bay staff.400 Complainants reported being charged for ‘malingering’,401 or accused by high-ranking staff of faking their injuries and subsequently instructed to return to work.402 In some cases, complainants developed further injuries after being instructed by supervising officers to perform above and beyond their physical capacities, or in circumstances where supervising staff chose to disregard medical ‘chits’ and doctors’ restrictions.403

This also included being ridiculed about their physical appearance when suffering from a medical condition.404 One complainant told the Taskforce of being made to wear a sign around his neck which read ‘unclean’ after he was diagnosed with a viral infection.405
16.6 Locational case studies

(a) HMAS Nirimba

Formerly a Royal Naval Air Station during World War II, HMAS Nirimba was commissioned on 1 April 1953 as a joint Naval Air Repair Yard and technical training establishment for the Navy’s Fleet Air Arm. It was re-commissioned two years later as the Navy Apprentice Training Establishment. HMAS Nirimba had four separate training streams, specialising in training at varying levels in the fields of Marine Engineering, Marine Hull Engineering, Weapons Electrical Engineering and Aviation Engineering. HMAS Nirimba was decommissioned on 25 February 1994, having trained close to 13 000 young men and women from the Navy and other Commonwealth Navies.

The Taskforce received complaints from 48 complainants which were assessed to be within the Taskforce Terms of Reference and to raise plausible allegations of abuse at HMAS Nirimba. Below is some statistical information about complaints of abuse at HMAS Nirimba.

Abuse by decade:
- 1950s – one complainant;
- 1960s – 10 complainants;
- 1970s – 15 complainants;
- 1980s – 19 complainants; and
- 1990s – three complainants.

Complainants:
- male – 45 complainants;
- female – three complainants;
- 42 complainants were undertaking initial training at the time of the abuse; and
- 40 complainants experienced abuse where the alleged abuser was another apprentice.

Category of abuse:
- 16 complainants reported sexual abuse;
- six complainants reported sexual harassment;
- 37 complainants reported physical abuse; and
- 38 complainants reported harassment and bullying.

At the time of the abuse, most complainants were junior apprentices undertaking initial training within the Navy (42 complainants) and were generally between 15 and 18 years of age. Almost all of the complainants from HMAS Nirimba were male (45 complainants).

The vast majority of abuse at HMAS Nirimba was reported to have occurred within the 1970s and 1980s (34 complainants). Over this period in particular, the abuse reported was largely harassment and bullying and physical abuse, comprising acts perpetrated within a context of hazing or initiation by groups of senior apprentices against junior apprentices. Allegations of harassment and bullying and physical abuse vastly outweighed all other reported types of abuse at HMAS Nirimba, with these behaviours frequently carried out in tandem. Of particular note is that much of this abuse was experienced by complainants on an ongoing basis over a period of months or in some cases years, as opposed to isolated incidents of abuse. A number of complainants suggested they were targeted for abuse on account of being physically smaller in stature than other apprentices. Complainants also reported that abuse was often witnessed by other classmates and peers, both adding to the humiliation they experienced as well as further entrenching a culture of fear and intimidation amongst witnesses that they could be the next to be targeted.
It appears that senior apprentices exercised authority over the junior apprentices in an informal hierarchy that was implicitly condoned by higher ranking staff. Many complainants spoke of a culture of abuse at HMAS Nirimba, described as a ‘culture of thuggery’ and a ‘culture of unfairness and brutality’ within an ‘accepted code of silence ... implicitly approved by the hierarchy’.

(i) Sexual abuse

Sixteen complainants to the Taskforce experienced sexual abuse at HMAS Nirimba. This included an increasing number of incidents of sexual abuse in the 1960s and 1970s, reaching a peak during the 1980s. The sexual abuse reported at HMAS Nirimba was notable for its severity.

Most cases of sexual abuse were carried out by senior apprentices either individually or as a group (10 complainants). The majority of complainants who were subjected to sexual abuse experienced acts of penetration with bodily objects (nine complainants). A number of cases of sexual abuse were particularly violent.

Two junior apprentices also experienced having broom or mop handles inserted into their anuses. Some complainants also reported being forcibly held down and stripped naked, often while bedding and towels were placed over their heads, and dragged naked down the hallways to the showers. They would then be subjected to nugetting, where their genitals were covered in grease or boot polish and in some cases scrubbed with hard-bristled brushes while other apprentices stood by and watched.

A number of complainants also experienced indecent assault, including incidents where groups of senior apprentices would masturbate in front of junior apprentices and touch them with erect penises, or order junior apprentices to masturbate in front of them under threat of violence.

While there were not many cases of sexual abuse carried out by staff members (three complainants), these instances of abuse involved actual penetration, attempted penetration, and forced masturbation.

(ii) Sexual harassment

All incidents of sexual harassment occurred in conjunction with other types of abuse (six complainants). Complainants who reported abuse at HMAS Nirimba experienced sexual harassment from fellow staff members including having lewd and indecent cartoons and images displayed in the workplace, and being verbally abused on account of their gender.

(iii) Physical abuse

The Taskforce received a large number of complaints regarding physical abuse at HMAS Nirimba that occurred during the 1970s and 1980s (25 complainants). Complainants reported having been subjected to ongoing and sustained campaigns of physical violence at HMAS Nirimba during this time (20 complainants).

Abuse by senior peers typically involved acts of physical abuse, as well as verbal threats, acts of intimidation and apprehended physical abuse. On many occasions, junior apprentices would be indiscriminately targeted for group bashings where they were held down by multiple people and punched repeatedly in the stomach and chest (13 complainants). A number of complainants also experienced blanket bashings where they would be trapped in their beds and beaten while their faces were covered by blankets or sheets so they could not identify the abusers (eight complainants). Several complainants spoke of being physically constrained, such as being locked in a wardrobe or hung in a sea bag on a rotary line for hours.

Abuse included practices such as bed tipping, where junior apprentices were forcibly woken in the middle of the night and thrown out of their bed when their bed was rolled upside down or up-ended vertically (17 complainants).

Complainants told the Taskforce that much of the abuse would occur at night time, and a number of complainants reported experiencing insomnia, sleep deprivation and a fear of sleeping, with some complainants having slept with weapons in order to protect themselves.
Complainants reported that on occasion, staff at HMAS Nirimba encouraged or instigated abuse among apprentices, for example, by suggesting that apprentices ‘forcibly wash’ their fellow peers, resulting in painful and humiliating scrubings with hard-bristled brooms and harsh chemical detergents.

(iv) Harassment and bullying

A high proportion of the complaints about abuse at HMAS Nirimba involved some form of harassment and bullying (38 complainants). Of these, a significant number of complaints related to harassment and bullying that occurred during the 1970s and 1980s (28 complainants). It appears that during this time, many complainants experienced ongoing and sustained campaigns of harassment and bullying, largely in the context of hazing or initiation by senior apprentices against junior apprentices (20 complainants).

Complainants reported that harassment and bullying was largely carried out by senior apprentices after-hours and outside of formal training periods. Typically, groups of junior apprentices would be instructed by senior apprentices to undertake activities such as duck-waddling or slack drills, including being made to run in the middle of the night, often in cold temperatures, with full kit or bedding strapped to their backs, or carrying tyres, fire hoses or rifles above their heads. Other complainants reported being ordered to complete unreasonable tasks or chores for senior apprentices and experiencing beatings for minor infractions or when tasks were deemed not to have been completed to the satisfaction of a senior apprentice.

A number of complainants also experienced bishing (eight complainants), including locker break-ins where their property would be scattered on the floor, placed outside on fire escapes or hidden, having toilet water thrown over them as they slept, having their beds urinated on (either when empty or occupied), or waking up to live and dead fish in their beds. A few complainants also reported a negative attitude by both peers and staff when seeking medical aid for dealing with illness and injury.

A number of complainants were subjected to harassment and bullying carried out by members of staff (12 complainants). This largely comprised excessively harsh training or disciplinary practices, and included being made to march up and down a runway with a rifle held over head for two hours, or being given arbitrary punishments or extra work, for reasons including having an untidy locker or not performing push-ups properly.

(b) Australian Clearance Diving Team Four, HMAS Stirling

[For] my personal thonging initiation I had to lean on the wall and pull my pants down and was hit extremely hard with the thongs about 10 times. I almost vomited and was bleeding across my back side. … [I was] still new to the workplace when my co-workers started gargoyling and when everybody found out that I hadn’t gargoyled yet I was pressured to urinate into my own mouth. If I did not do this I would have been an outcast. I still feel ashamed for performing the act.

All of these initiations were known to the command of AUSCDT-4 and they allowed it and also encouraged it. As a new member I knew performing these acts was the only way to fit in and be accepted.

The Taskforce received complaints from 18 complainants which were assessed to be within the Taskforce Terms of Reference and to raise plausible allegations of abuse at HMAS Stirling. This included a number of complaints involving physical abuse, sexual abuse, and harassment and bullying carried out by members of the Australian Clearance Diving Team Four (AUSCDT-4) (seven complainants). Some of this abuse was reported as having taken place in the context of initiation rituals, while other complainants reported being pressured into participating in abusive acts on a regular basis throughout their time on the base.

All complainants who experienced abuse within the AUSCDT-4 reported being pressured into participating in the following:

- ‘Thonging’, where members of the AUSCDT-4 would line up in two rows with rubber thongs in hand. New members would be made to strip partially naked and march down the aisle while other members repeatedly slapped them as hard as they could on the chest and back with thongs. Some complainants told the Taskforce that members would wet or freeze their thongs to make the practice more painful. Complainants reported being covered with large welt marks (some of which drew blood) which would turn into large bruises after participating in a thonging. One complainant told the Taskforce that he almost vomited from the pain and ended up bleeding across his backside.
• ‘Gargoyling’, where members of the AUSCDT-4 would be made to urinate into their own mouths by bending from a standing position, or on occasion, would urinate into another person’s mouth.431

Other types of abuse reported to the Taskforce included variations of ‘naked drinking’, where complainants were pressured to run naked in front of the rest of their team,432 or made to lay on their back naked while another person poured beer over them during the course of a drinking game.433

Complainants told the Taskforce that participation in these forms of abuse was considered a demonstration of one’s willingness to be part of the team, or that participation was a necessary part of being accepted by the team.434 Complainants reported that not to do so would be seen as ‘weak’,435 while those who refused to participate were often vilified or subsequently considered an outcast within the unit.436

The Taskforce received a number of reports that these practices of abuse would be witnessed by supervisors and were often carried out by members of the Navy in positions of command.437

c) Ships

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 861 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse within the Navy (39 per cent of all cases), experienced by more than 650 complainants. This included 284 cases raising plausible allegations of abuse that occurred while complainants were serving on ships in the Navy’s fleet.

The Taskforce conducted a close review of complaints received by 92 complainants regarding abuse that occurred on the following ships, as they had the highest number of complaints: HMAS Sydney III (22 complainants), HMAS Melbourne II (16 complainants), HMAS Success II (14 complainants), HMAS Perth II (13 complainants), HMAS Sydney IV (11 complainants), HMAS Brisbane II (11 complainants), and HMAS Adelaide II (eight complainants).

The summary below is based on information provided by the 92 complainants who experienced abuse while serving on these ships. It is important to note that where figures are given, they only relate to complaints of abuse experienced by people during their service on these ships. These figures do not represent the total number of complaints received by the Taskforce regarding abuse that occurred on ships in the Navy’s fleet. Rather, they are used to represent trends and patterns in the abuse that has occurred over time.

The vast majority of complainants who experienced abuse on ships were men (78 complainants), in the period ranging from the late 1950s to 2011, with the highest number of complaints of abuse during the 1960s and 1970s. Only 14 female complainants reported experiencing abuse on ships (15 per cent of complaints reviewed). However, women are disproportionately overrepresented in complaints of abuse on ships, insofar as women comprised only 19 per cent of total Navy personnel in 2010-2011 (with a smaller percentage serving on ships)438 and have historically comprised even less.

A significant number of complainants were very young at the time of the abuse on ships. It appears that on a number of ships, all complainants who experienced abuse were 23 years of age or younger at the time of the abuse.439 Of particular note is that in earlier years, Seamen were eligible to serve on ships when they were as young as 16 years of age.440

A very high proportion of all alleged abusers on ships were in positions of seniority to complainants at the time of the abuse (82 per cent of complaints reviewed). A number of alleged abusers on ships were senior officers, holding ranks such as a Lieutenant Commander,441 and Captain.442

It appears that the isolated and closed environments on board the ships presented some unique circumstances for particular forms of abuse to occur. The sections below provide a summary of the specific types and forms of abuse experienced by complainants on the ships closely reviewed by the Taskforce.
(i) Initiation rituals

A number of complainants who served on ships, including the HMAS Brisbane II, HMAS Success II, and HMAS Sydney IV, described being subjected to ritualised initiation or Crossing the Line ceremonies for new sailors who were yet to cross the equator. These incidents were reported as having taken place from the 1980s to the 2000s, with one incident occurring in the late 2000s.443

These ceremonies often involved complainants being ‘hog tied’, restrained, or having their wrists and ankles bound together by large groups of sailors who then proceeded to physically, and sometimes sexually, assault them.444 All of the complainants who reported these incidents told the Taskforce that they took place with the involvement of senior sailors or officers who would sometimes take on the principal and presiding roles within the mock court set-up of Crossing the Line ceremonies. Several complainants also described being covered in foul ‘concoctions’ or ‘slime’ containing human discharge445 before being assaulted in front of large numbers of crew, while others reported being left taped to a pole or with their limbs bound for up to an hour afterwards (see discussion in section 16.5(c) above).

(ii) Physical abuse and threats of violence

The Taskforce received a number of reports of physical abuse that occurred while complainants were serving on ships in the Navy (34 complainants). Some of this abuse was carried out in the context of initiation ceremonies as described above. However, other complainants reported being physically assaulted by groups of two or more alleged abusers (25 complainants), and a smaller number of complainants reported physical abuse by single alleged abusers. This abuse included both apparently random as well as targeted physical assaults. Some complainants described being randomly punched and ‘whacked’ in their hammocks at night by groups of sailors, with one complainant who reported having his hammock repeatedly turned over such that he would land on the steel deck.447 Another complainant reported being ambushed from behind by his direct supervisor and put into a ‘full nelson’ (where both an alleged abuser’s arms are used to encircle a person’s arms under the armpit and secured at their neck), while another sailor tried to unzip his overalls. The complainant told the Taskforce that this incident was witnessed by the whole mess who were laughing throughout the duration of the abuse.448

Several complainants reported ongoing physical abuse carried out by multiple alleged abusers. For example, one complainant, who had been suffering from a serious illness which made him unable to complete certain tasks, reported that he was physically abused by multiple members of superior rank over a period of several years during the 1990s.449

In another example, a complainant reported being frequently made the target of ‘stacks on’ or ‘rucking’ while serving on board HMAS Perth II during the late 1990s, where he was pulled to the ground while a group of other sailors would jump and pile on top him.450

A small number of complainants told the Taskforce that they were threatened with being thrown overboard by members who were in positions of seniority to them.451 For example, one complainant reported being overpowered on the ship’s deck and threatened to be thrown into the ocean if he did not perform a sexual act on the alleged abuser.452

The Taskforce also received reports of actual attempts to throw complainants overboard, for example, one complainant told the Taskforce of an incident during which another sailor tried to push them over the side of the ship, in full view of other Navy personnel.453

(iii) Sexual abuse of young male sailors

A significant number of complainants experienced sexual abuse while serving on ships (45 complainants). The Taskforce received a particularly high number of complaints of sexual assault of young male sailors (39 complainants), particularly throughout the 1960s and 1970s.
Many complainants told the Taskforce of having experienced sexual assault carried out by individuals in positions of considerable seniority to them at the time of the abuse. For example, two complainants reported being sexually propositioned about how far they could advance in the Navy and then were anally penetrated without their consent by the same senior officer. Another complainant told the Taskforce that a senior officer would make him get into the shower and rub soap over him, and that on a number of occasions he entered the officer’s cabin and found him with his sheets pulled down to his thighs and his erection showing above the bedding. The complainant also told the Taskforce of comments made by the officer that another sailor in the complainant’s position had ‘allowed himself to be used for sex’.

Some complainants told the Taskforce that certain alleged abusers had developed a reputation for acts of sexual abuse, and that the abuse they experienced was known about by other peers and members of superior rank. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce of his experiences involving an officer during the early 1990s:

He ordered me into his room and then locked the door. In his cabin he attempted to have oral sex with me and then brutally raped me. I found out later that [the officer] had a reputation on the ship for sexually molesting junior sailors.

The Taskforce received a number of complaints regarding other forms of sexual abuse of male sailors that were prevalent on board ships, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s. This included a number of reports of indecent assault (23 complainants). For example, one complainant told the Taskforce of having woken up one night to find an unidentified abuser touching his genitals. In addition, at least five complainants reported being subjected to forced masturbation.

(iv) Treatment of women

Women began serving on ships in significant numbers after the 1990s. The Taskforce received a number of complaints regarding abuse of women on ships after this time. Many of these complainants reported that they were specifically targeted for abuse on account of their gender.

For example, one female complainant reported being subjected to constant sexual innuendos and insults not only from peers and members of senior rank but also from male subordinates. Another complainant described working in an environment where one of her male counterparts displayed an obvious dislike of women.

Some female complainants described the existence of pre-organised competitions on board ships where male sailors would place bets or conduct polls to see which female sailors they could have sex with. Other complainants experienced sexual harassment by members of senior rank occurring in private on a targeted, ongoing basis. For example, one complainant reported that a Leading Seaman made suggestive comments to her, while another complainant had her direct supervisor frequently expose his genitals to her.

Of particular note is the fact that as recently as 2009, a Commission of Inquiry was conducted into HMAS Success II by the Hon Roger Gyles QC after allegations of sexual misconduct on board the ship were widely reported in the media. This Inquiry related specifically to a tour of Asia between March and May 2009, and included allegations of ‘predatory sexual conduct towards female crew members (including the existence of bounties on the heads of females) and abuse and intimidation of female crew members ashore’. At the conclusion of this Inquiry in 2011, the Hon Roger Gyles QC determined that ‘a fiercely tribal culture’ existed on board HMAS Success II where ‘predatory sexual behaviour’ had been prevalent since 2004. This included ‘inappropriate conduct toward females – including sexual advances [physical and verbal], insulting remarks and workplace bullying’.

As a result of the Inquiry a number of recommendations were made to Defence with suggested changes to improve the conduct of inquiries, as well as the application of military justice and administrative procedures within Defence.
16.7 Individual case studies

(a) Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1970s

I joined the Royal Australian Navy at the age of 16 at the Junior Recruit training school HMAS Leeuwin. It was the first time I had ever been away from my family home.

The first incident of sexual abuse occurred in the early 1970s. I had only been on HMAS Leeuwin for a number of weeks. That morning, I was showering and when I was about to leave the shower room I was approached by a senior recruit who was on duty. This senior recruit questioned me as to why I did not shave. I was not as physically developed as others and had no facial hair. I said to the senior recruit that there was nothing to shave and I had never used a razor. The senior recruit started yelling at me “you will shave every morning, everyone has to shave every morning”.

This yelling drew the attention of a senior sailor, not a recruit, who took over the abuse. He said to me “seeing that there is nothing to shave on your face, I will have to shave you somewhere else”. He ordered me to strip and go to the drying room. He followed me in with either four or five other senior recruits. The senior recruits were from a division nine months older than my intake. I am not sure where they had come from as I had not seen them before.

He handed them a razor and some boot polish and ordered them to shave my pubic area using the boot polish as shaving cream. As he stood there he said with a laugh “there is not much to shave here either is there?”. The senior recruits held me down and one of them shaved me. I remember being very scared but I did not struggle too much as I kind of knew if I did, I would be worse off. When it was done, he told the others to leave and as they did, he pulled my testicles very hard and wiped the back of his hands which were covered in boot polish on my face. He then told me to go shower and clean up. I was then told that I had to report back to him after lights out that night.

I remember that after this incident, I recalled going over to the toilets and sitting there crying after speaking with my mother by phone as it was her birthday. This was the first time I had spoken to or had any contact with my parents since leaving home.

That night, I reported to the senior sailor as ordered that morning. He was there again with a number of the more senior junior recruits. He again ordered me to strip and go to the drying room. I left my clothes on the basin in the shower room.

I was held down by some of the senior recruits and then felt pain like I had never felt before. I was held face down on the ground and then either a broom handle or mop handle was inserted into my anus. The pain was unbearable and I remember screaming. Someone put their hand over my mouth to stifle my screams. I remember there was a fair bit of laughter going on from them.

I am not sure how long this incident lasted but I do not think it was a long time. The senior sailor then ordered the recruits out. As I was lying on the tiled floor, I remember him coming up close to me and whispering into my ear “you will learn to like it”. He pulled me up by my hair and then he put his tongue in my ear and licked the side of my mouth and then left the room.

I recall going back to my bed and putting a towel in my mouth to stop the noise of me crying being heard by others.

The next day or the day after, I was approached by one of the senior recruits who had been involved in the night incident. He said he was sorry for his actions being involved. He said that he had to do what he was told to do or he would have copped it as well. He told me to keep my nose clean and keep away from the senior sailor. He said “he is trouble and will make your life hell if you don’t watch out”. I think he really meant it and was truly sorry. Whilst you could not have a friendship with anyone from a more senior intake he did approach me a few times to ask if I was doing okay. It is strange but that meant a lot to me.

Similar incidents like this occurred three or more times over a period that I am not sure of. The same senior sailor was again the perpetrator on these occasions. I knew that whenever the senior sailor was on night duty, our block was in for it.
I was so frightened a couple of nights he was on duty that I hid and slept in the top of my wardrobe hiding from him until one night he found me in there. That was the worst night of all. Instead of using something like Vaseline, they used boot polish on the end of a mop handle as a form of lubricant which burnt and caused even more pain than the other times. I think there were only three senior recruits plus the senior sailor that night.

When it was over, I recalled the absolute agony I was in trying to clean the boot polish from my back side. I remember not sleeping that night so I could get up early to be first in the shower block so I could clean myself the best I could so that none of the other recruits would see the boot polish all over me. I was in a real bad way that morning.

There was also a lot of bleeding and I had to stuff toilet paper in my underpants to try and stop the bleeding. I had to do this for a number of days. The sores in my anus became infected and the pain would not go away. The bloodied sores continued to weep. I recall them being so bad that one day the pain got so unbearable that I had to dry them with a form of disinfectant I obtained from the cleaning room. I think that may have done more harm than good but I did not know what else to do as I was not confident to talk to anyone about it. The pain when I put the disinfectant on them was mind blowing and I recall I almost passed out.

There was nothing else I could do without anyone finding out. I was fearful that if anyone found out what I had been subjected to, things would get worse for me including getting bashed. There was no way you could “dob” someone in without being punished for it.

A few days later we were on the parade ground in our white shorts and white singlets for physical or sport instruction. It was a serious offence to have any marks on our white clothes, and would result in punishment. On this morning, I was unaware some of the blood from the sores and scabs on the inside and around my anus had seeped through my white shorts even though I still had toilet paper stuffed inside … my underpants. It was noticed by the instructor, he yelled abuse and called me to the side of the parade ground. He asked me what the blood stain was. I said that I had an infection and was bleeding. He told me to immediately report to the sick bay which I did.

When I went there, I was sent to a room and a nurse saw me. She told me to drop my pants and after examination, she said “I am not going to ask you what caused this”. She said I had two options, I could fill out a sick bay form and see the doctor or I could leave the sick bay which she said for my own sake would be the better thing to do. She said to me I should take care in the future. I also remember her saying “you have beautiful teeth and you would not want to have anything happen to them by speaking out”. She said to me it was a dischargeable offence if I was involved in any homosexual act and I would be sent home with a dishonourable discharge that would affect me for the rest of my life. She said that those types of things did not happen at Leeuwin or in the Navy. She gave me a tube of cream, I returned to my group and carried on the rest of the day as normal.

For long a period of time, I was not only scared of what was happening to me but also that I could be discharged dishonourably and have to tell my parents as to the reasons why. Things got so bad for me that I worked up the courage to go to confession with the Navy Chaplain and told him what had been happening to me. He told me I had done nothing wrong and I was not to blame myself. He was caring and in fact some time later he found a sponsor family for me. If you had a sponsor family you could spend a Saturday night when you had shore leave with them rather than returning to the base. To have sponsors was one of the best things you could have during your time at Leeuwin.

I am not sure if it was the next weekend or weekend later, I had a day of shore leave. I do not remember how I came up with the idea but when I went ashore, I found a public hospital in Fremantle and went there as I was still in pain with sores and infection. I do not remember much but I remember being question[ed] as to why I had gone to that hospital and not to the Navy Hospital. I was still in uniform because as a recruit at Leeuwin, you did not have civilian clothes to wear. I think I gave a false name at the hospital and they prescribed me some form of antibiotic. I could have given my correct name but am not sure. The antibiotics I received from the hospital in Fremantle worked and after a time, the sores healed.
After the day of being sent to the sick bay from the parade ground, that form of abuse by the senior sailor never happened again. I look back and think that somehow [this was because] he found out that I was sent to the sick bay and because I did not “dob” him in. It was the standard unwritten rule that you do not “dob” on anyone for any reason at Leeuwin, he somehow saw me in a different light.

Some months later, for some reason I had a meeting with a welfare/social worker. It must have been part of [the] routine where every junior recruit had a meeting with her. During the meeting she said something like, “there is something disturbing you, do you want to tell me what it is?” I told her what happened to me without fully going into the details of the mop handle during those early weeks at Leeuwin. She said to me not to take it personally it was just part of the toughening up training that will serve you well later in your Navy life.468

(b) Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s

Most of my memories come back as flashbacks to particular episodes so that is all that I can recount, and thus there is no chronological order. I found the bastardisation/bullying/abuse to be ongoing and horrible as I persevered to be one of the boys. … Instead I sadly discovered that the real enemy was not in Vietnam but amongst my fellow sailors, and I had become an unknown casualty of an unknown war.

I joined up [in the early 1970s] with high hopes of serving my country for all of my working life, whilst enjoying the comradeship of like-minded people. I was discharged [one year later] as a shattered boy whose hopes and dreams had turned into a living nightmare. It took a number of years to overcome the physical and mental scars that the Navy had given me. I have never fully gotten over the feelings of being a failure in the service. ...

I went AWOL in the early 1970s when I could not stand the pressure any longer. Out for two hours leave and returned two days later. The duty officer and duty Chief Petty Officer were both too drunk to charge me that night. ...

After working hours there was no effective supervision by the ships company, only by senior apprentices. [I] put up with the bastardisation in term 1 hoping that things would get better in term 2. [I] put up with bastardisation in term 2 hoping that things would get better in term 3. [I] discovered in term 3 that the bastardisation continued and that I just didn’t have the strength to put up with it any more.

[I was] tired of sleeping with a tomahawk under my pillow, and a lack of sleep due to fear of attack during the night. Often the fear of attack from the threats of more senior apprentices was hardest to bear, as you would never know if or when you were going to be assaulted. ...

[I was tired of] having my bed rolled with me in it and then being verbally and physically abused.

[Of] having my locker broken into and my gear messed with so that I would be reported for failing to look after it, and punished as a result.

[Of] double marching up and down a runway as punishment with a rifle held over my head, relieved every twenty minutes by ten minutes of brisk Physical Training. This would go on for two hours and would be supervised by a Duty Petty Officer of the ship’s company. This was accepted at the time as tough but lawful punishment, and it was the harshest official punishment I encountered in the Navy. In retrospect I think that the Petty Officer got his kicks out of the power trip over apprentices.

Of the Navy finding grog in my locker that I hadn’t put there, but I got the blame.

[I was tired of] being treated as the lowest of the low by everyone more senior than me.

Whilst sitting on the toilet having buckets of water thrown over the toilet door by more senior apprentices because I wasn’t fast enough to obey their orders to hurry up and do their bidding. ...

Trying a number of times to transfer to general service to get away from the bastardisation, but told each time by an officer or Chief Petty Officer that I was too young and I should just stay out of the way of any trouble makers, and toughen up.
Being dragged into an old WW2 vintage ablutions block with a kit bag over my head where I was verbally abused, bashed, stripped, covered in a grease of some kind and then scrubbed all over with floor scrubbing brushes. Then they started to cut off my body hair with a pair of scissors whilst shoving either a mop or broom handle up my rectum. This was fortunately stopped by a more senior apprentice approaching the building, and the offenders running off. The senior apprentice then told me to get up, clean up, shut up and piss off. This resulted in me attending the sickbay some time later as one of the cuts from the scissors [on my penis] had become infected. I could not tell anybody about this horrible episode as it was just too humiliating.

Being approached one evening by a small group of more senior apprentices who verbally and physically abused me before I was king hit, waking up in the sick bay some time later. I could not report the matter as I had been told on many occasions that I would be dead meat if I dobbed.

Being nuggetted or toothpasted. Having my towel, toilet bag and clothing thrown on the wet floor or into a toilet and flushed whilst I was showering.

Being forced to the back of the food line or canteen line, having to provide apprentices more senior than me with cigarettes, having to lick clean a pair of boots belonging to a more senior apprentice and then being roughed up because it wasn’t a good enough job. Being thumped just because they could. In the end even a member of my own intake started to give me verbal and physical abuse. ...

If you’ve read about the junior recruits at HMAS Leeuwin then you can relate most of those incidents to HMAS Nirimba, except that it was probably more hidden, and for three and a half years instead of just one year. ... Unfortunately much of my naval life was lived in abject fear.

Basically, the Navy seemed to leave it up to the apprentices to look after themselves outside of working hours, and this I believe enabled a “Lord of the Flies” mentality to flourish. ...

So here I am at the age of 59 still coming to terms with events that happened over 40 years ago. One of the things that shocked me most was the obvious unfairness of it all, that people could just get away with that kind of terrible behaviour, and that there seemed to be a blind eye to it all by the Navy.

I joined the Navy at the age of 15 as a happy boy with high hopes for the future, and was discharged at the age of 16 as a frightened boy whose dreams had been shattered, a “training failure”.469

[c] Male Navy member, HMAS Nirimba and [Location redacted], late 1980s

[In the late 1980s] I enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy. I was 17 years of age. ...

Within two days of enlistment [at HMAS Nirimba], my entire intake was forced to go for a run in the middle of the night, across the airfield. We were made to carry tyres above our heads. This went on for hours. I suffered an injury to my left shoulder and left knee as a result of a fall during this run. ... [Another apprentice] would tell me and several others often to “get out of the way or I will fuck you in the arse”.

In or about August there was an incident in the metal fabrication shop involving fire. I was forced by the civilian instructors to see [the Chief Petty Officer] in the Marine Engineering School. [The Chief Petty Officer] threatened me with course failure, which would result in dishonourable discharge, if I did not tell him who was responsible for the fire. I reluctantly told him. [A senior apprentice] was present at the time. The members of my class responsible for the fire were disciplined. I later saw [the senior apprentice present at the meeting] talking with members of my class.

Later that evening I was severely beaten after lights out. There were about 15 people involved in bashing me in the sleeping barracks. I was black and blue from the bashing. After the beating I was grabbed by [several apprentices]. I was placed face down over a desk, my underwear was removed and I was raped for several hours while being held down. If I tried to fight or move many of them would punch my spine and head until I stopped struggling. I passed out and awoke in the early hours of the morning bleeding and vomiting. I was in shock.
Shortly after the bashing and gang rape I attended Parade and [the Lieutenant Commander] saw that my ear was black and that I was bleeding from the ear. I was taken to the sick bay and asked questions by him and a few others. I told them what had happened. I was told that they were moving me [to another Division]. Apart from moving me, nothing else was done. I was told that I best not make a fuss. ...

Over the next few months, pieces of my work, which were to be assessed and marked, disappeared or were vandalised. ...

The following year, I was on duty as a senior apprentice. The Duty Petty Officer raped and sexually touched several girls on the top floor. On one occasion I caught him in bed with one of the girls who claimed she had been raped. The next morning, she reported that she had been raped by him. ... I reported what I had witnessed and later left HMAS Nirimba. ...

I was transferred to [a ship] in [the late 1980s]. I was onboard [the ship] when I was told by the Chief Petty Officer Coxswain that I would have to give evidence in the Court Martial of the Petty Officer who I had caught in bed with the WRAN. I was again threatened with non-promotion and advancement, so I gave evidence.

After giving evidence at the Court Martial, I returned to [the ship] and was again raped by several men. ... This assault took place at about 2300 in the forward sleeping quarters for junior sailors. I did not report this assault as I was too embarrassed and ashamed. I was then victimised. My task book (for my apprenticeship) went missing, I was singled out for the bad jobs, I was forced to clean out and refurbish the fuel and sewerage tanks and the air was turned off while I was inside. I was given broken equipment, or none, to work with. ...

I was a ships diver onboard [the ship when we] were alerted to [the submarine] having dived with two men outside the sub. ... We were on search and rescue with the entire fleet, coast guard, many civilian boats and various helicopters. Late in the evening or early the next morning, I was placed in a zodiac inflatable boat with the ships clearance diver and another ships diver, for the purpose of recovering one of the bodies. However, the seas were too rough and we were brought back in. I did see one of the bodies in the water before we were recalled. The next day I learned the identity of the lost sailors and I knew them both from submarine school. ... I was upset and asked questions about what had happened but I was told not to ask any more questions or there would be consequences.

I was then assaulted by four or five sailors in the forward sleeping quarters of [the ship]. This was reprisal for having asked questions about the lost sailors. At the end of my bashing one of the sailors told me that I was finished in the Navy and that I had no hope of advancement. They then left me there bruised and bleeding.

[Later that year] I fell down [a] hatchway. ... I believe I was pushed. I injured my right arm [requiring stiches in my elbow] right shoulder, left arm, left shoulder, spine and both legs. I had pins and needles down both legs. I was given Panadol and later sent to [the] Naval Hospital for x-rays. I still suffer medical problems as a result of the injuries I sustained in that fall. I was subsequently transferred to [another base] and then discharged on medical grounds.

I have suffered intrusive dreams for more than twenty years. I avoided sexual contact with anyone for many years. ... I am claustrophobic and afraid of dark spaces. I have trouble with relationships. ... I do not socialise as I have trouble relating to people. I have had two failed marriages and many failed friendships. I have trust issues and anger problems. I avoid the ocean and swimming.

I have not been provided with many of the qualifications I earned while in the Navy, making employment difficult. ... I have been diagnosed with psychiatric conditions, which I attribute to the abuses I suffered in the Navy. My diagnoses include Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, chronic pain syndrome and chronic depression. I have attempted suicide three times and think about it almost every day. ...

I believe that my personal standing in the community has been damaged forever and that no amount of compensation will fix what has happened to me.
[d] Female Navy member, [Location redacted], late 1990s

In [the late 1990s] I enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy. ... I was 17 years old at the time. It began when a friend brought alcohol onto base, into my room. Our accommodation block was a mixed sex facility. I had never lived away from home before, and this was my first experience with alcohol. I became intoxicated. I was walking back from the bathroom when a member from my [class] grabbed me and took me to another room, straight across the corridor from my own. This room belonged to another male, and there was a third in the room also. I was intoxicated and overpowered by the three men. They sexually assaulted me. While they were assaulting me, one of them opened the door and allowed several other naval personnel to watch. When they had finished, they threw me out into the corridor with no clothing on. I was greeted by another member patrolling the building. I was let back into my room and left alone until morning.

The following morning I was informed that the whole of the training facility was aware of what had happened the night before. I was being portrayed as a female who had just had sex with three males. I was offered no support. I was victimised, bullied and bastardised. This was carried out by not only the three perpetrators, but other personnel and higher ranking superiors.

I was constantly being given spot room inspections and failed in my [class]. I had chairs thrown at my door during the night. The three male perpetrators would try and break into my room at all hours of the night. People would make derogatory comments to me, and I was portrayed as a “slut”. Each time I spoke up and brought my fears and concerns to my [class] superiors I was told to keep quiet. I was ashamed to inform my parents of what I was going through.

One day, I was called into the [school office], and was informed that my father had been contacted. He had been informed that I had had sex with three males and was in a lot of trouble. I was told that in order to pass through [school] I was to keep quiet or I would lose my job, and my family would be notified again that I was a troublemaker. I was still having to endure working with one of the offenders in [school].

Shortly afterwards, I was taken into an interview room where I was greeted by Coxswains. I was represented by my Warrant Officer at the time. I was interrogated, bullied and pressured by them. I was not aware of my legal rights. They recorded our conversation. One of the Coxswains turned the tape recorder off and stated that if I did not agree that it was consensual sex I would lose my job, my parents would find out and that they would keep me there until I agreed to this. I agreed under complete duress. I was charged with sexual misconduct, having to pay $100 and serve seven days of chooks punishment, with the same three male perpetrators. The chooks punishment entailed mustering at the ... gangway several times throughout the day, up to 2300hrs and being detailed to different areas of the base for cleaning duties.

I was always sent with the three males to the same area. They were given favourable treatment by other sailors and were allowed to leave early. I was taken to the medical centre ... and tested for pregnancy and HIV. I was never given the results.

I was sent to two counselling sessions. Afterwards, I took myself to the medical centre, stating that I was not coping emotionally. They told me that I probably needed anti-depressants but that “they wouldn’t give them to me”. They sent me to an Alcoholics Anonymous program and labelled me a binge drinker. After some mandatory sessions I elected not to continue. I was informed that if I was found drinking again they would “throw me out” of the Navy ...

I was emotionally frail, unable to cope with life and felt suicidal. Word of the assault had spread and I was taunted constantly by sailors.

My Warrant Officer [at a different base] on several occasions came to my house on the base and tried to have sexual relations with me. He stated that he had read my file and “knew what I was about”.

With no support, I went to see the Chaplain of the base. I saw him on a regular basis for some time and he literally saved my life. I was so emotionally and psychologically frail I felt like I couldn’t even function on a day to day basis. ...

I discharged in [the early 2000s]. This was because I could no longer cope with reminders of the assault. ...
Over the last fifteen years, I have thought about the incident every single day. I have [been] psychologically scarred for the rest of my life.471

(e) Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s

[A superior officer] took an interest in me when I returned to the wardroom after my posting on [another base]. His interests were always sexual in nature. He would make crude sexual remarks but as he was married with children I would feel uncomfortable but I would brush them off. I felt working at the wardroom was a real “boys club”. We just had to take the abuse as if we didn’t we would be treated like crap.

Whilst working in the galley alone, [he] would come up behind me and reach around my body from behind and brush past my breast, this happened on quite a lot of occasions. He would do it in such a way that you would be questioning yourself on what just happened.

[He] questioned me one time in his office in the wardroom about why I had not been promoted. ... I told him that I did not know why as my [assessments] were always quite good. He proceeded to say that “I must not be blowing the right people and that we would have a closed door session to get me promoted sooner as he would be able to speak to one of his mates in promotions but there are things I need to do for him first”. I felt disgusted and appalled by what he said. He was gesturing that I was to give him sexual favours. I never discussed my promotion again and when I was offered my promotion about a year later I ended up turning it down because I was still disgusted by what [he] told me.

[He] would always make crude sexual remarks and would always push himself upon the females working under him. When new seamen would arrive he would assess if they were pretty enough and then start making moves on them also. Because of the boys club mentality at the wardroom I felt that there was no one we could speak to and that we didn’t want to cause any problems for ourselves. I loved working in the Navy and I loved it even more when I was posted to a ship. This was supposed to be my life long career.

We reported [his] conduct when [a colleague] was sexually assaulted by him in the female toilets after a function. Due to [him] being part of our chain of command and our other supervisors being [his] good friends we had to use a divisional system outside our own. Whilst the investigations started [he] was still our supervisor at the wardroom. It was a very stressful time until we put in a complaint. It then became a lot more stressful for me as they replaced [him] with his best mate. ...

The day [the senior sailor] took over the wardroom I was bullied by him. He made everything difficult for me. ...

If I was setting the tables in the wardroom for lunch he would question who set what table and if it was the table I did he would tell me to redo them cause they were wrong. One of the leading hands noticed this and said that he had done a couple even though he hadn’t and [the senior sailor] would say ”that’s how you are to set them” not knowing that I had actually done them and they were identical to the ones that he was making me redo.

We would have staff meetings and he would make sly remarks about people he could trust and people [who are] untrustworthy and would look at me. ...

One day [another senior sailor] left her email account open on one of the computers in the wardroom and I saw an email open written by her to [my previous supervisor]. This email said that she would make our lives hell and she will ensure that we would get our just deserves. She continued to call us bitches and trouble makers throughout the email.

This made me feel that no one cared and I was all alone when it came to needing someone to talk to. ...

Whilst all this bullying was going on, I became sicker and sicker and I was vomiting every morning on my way to work and one day it all became way too much. On my way home from work ... [I] proceeded to drive home. I was in a trance and tried to drive head on into a truck coming the opposite way. If it wasn’t for [a noise] in ... the car I would have killed myself and my [passenger] as I forgot he was there. ...
The next day I was to work behind the bar at lunch. We would turn up in our civilian clothing and then get changed into our uniforms at work (everyone who worked behind the bar did that). I turned up at work in my civilian clothing and was wearing a pair of thongs. I went out the back of the wardroom to the smokers pit were I saw [a supervisor] there with one of her friends talking. [She] stopped talking to her friend and looked at me and said “why are you wearing thongs, you aren’t allowed to wear thongs on the [base] and that is a chargeable offence”. ... I looked down [and] I saw her friend in a pair of thongs. I asked her if she was going to have her up on charges also as she was wearing thongs. She told me that I was being insubordinate and to go get changed and get behind the bar and she would speak to me then. That was the straw that broke the camel’s back. I completely lost it and broke down. I went to the staff room and called the medics for a doctor’s appointment as I was losing it, I was at my wits end with all the bullying and bastardisation. They said that they did not have one and I was to come in for sick parade the next day. I then told them that it was desperate and that if I didn’t see a doctor straight away I would drive off the [base] right now and kill myself as I can’t go on like this anymore.

They told me to come to them straight way. I left the wardroom without telling anyone and went straight to the medics. ... That day I was referred to [a hospital] where I spent two weeks as an inpatient. ...

Once I got out of [the hospital] I did not return to the wardroom. I worked under [another senior sailor]. My condition was still bad and had a lot of anxieties when going to work where I was then ... required to medically discharge from the Navy. ...

What has happened to me has destroyed my life I am not the person I used to be and before all this happened, I would love to be even half the person I used to be as my life previously was full of ambitions, motivation and I was very care free.

Now I struggle just to get out of bed, cook dinner, clean my house, and this black hole is suffocating me and I hate what this turned me into. I just want the old me back!!!

---

2. Above.
3. Above.
4. Above.
6. Above.
7. Above.
8. Above.
10. The site of HMAS Leeuwin was used for other purposes both before and after its use as a Junior Recruit Training Establishment. However, this report focuses on allegations of abuse while HMAS Leeuwin was operating as a Junior Recruit Training Establishment between 1960 and 1984.
13. Above, p 103.
16. Above.
17. Above.
18. Above.
19. Above.
20. Above.
22 Above.
23 Above.
27 Above.
28 Above.
29 Navy, Establishments, note 9.
41 Navy, Ships, Boats & Craft, note 37.
44 Above.
46 Above.
47 Above.
50 Above.
51 The Australian Women’s Register, note 48.
52 Navy, Women in the RAN, note 49.
53 The Australian Women’s Register, note 48.
54 Navy, Women in the RAN, note 49.
55 Above.
57 Adams, note 11, p 103.
58 Above, Appendix, pp 109-113. Note that the figures in the Appendix are based on information gathered from HMAS Leeuwin Reports of Proceedings and photographs included in annual Passing Out Parade books.
60 Email from Department of Defence Organisational Response Unit (ORU) to the Taskforce, 20 October 2014.
The term ‘initial training’ is used broadly to refer to individuals who, for example, entered the Navy as recruits at HMAS Cerberus and Junior Recruits at HMAS Leeuwin, and those who studied as apprentices at HMAS Nirimba.

Male Cadet Midshipman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1950s, [Name redacted]; Male Cadet Midshipman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1950s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s.


Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1960s to early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1960s to early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Cadet Midshipman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1950s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female Trainee, HMAS Cerberus, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female Midshipman, Location redacted, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], Location redacted, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], Location redacted, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], Location redacted, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], Location redacted, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Defence Abuse Response Taskforce, HMAS Leeuwin Report, note 64, p 43.

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Albatross, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Defence Abuse Response Taskforce, HMAS Leeuwin Report, note 64, p 43.

Male Apprentice, HMAS Albatross, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male [Rank redacted], HMAS Nirimba, early 1950s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Defence Abuse Response Taskforce, HMAS Leeuwin Report, note 64, p 35.

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Defence Abuse Response Taskforce, HMAS Leeuwin Report, note 64, p 35.

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Defence Abuse Response Taskforce, HMAS Leeuwin Report, note 64, p 40.

Above.

Above.

Above.

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Defence Abuse Response Taskforce, HMAS Leeuwin Report, note 64, p 39.

Defence Abuse Response Taskforce, above, p 39.

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1960s to late 1960s, [Name redacted].
Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
See, for example, Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1960s to early 1970s, [Name redacted].
Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
16. COMPLAINTS OF ABUSE IN THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY
Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Defence Abuse Response Taskforce, HMAS Leeuwin Report, note 64, pp 21-23.

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Defence Abuse Response Taskforce, HMAS Leeuwin Report, note 64, pp 35-36.

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Cadet Midshipman, HMAS Creswell, early 1950s, [Name redacted].

Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Midshipman, HMAS Creswell, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Cadet Midshipman, HMAS Creswell, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1980s; Male Midshipman, HMAS Creswell, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Midshipman, HMAS Creswell, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1980s; Male Midshipman, HMAS Creswell, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Cadet Midshipman, HMAS Creswell, late 1960s to early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Cadet Midshipman, HMAS Creswell, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Cadet Midshipman, HMAS Creswell, late 1960s to early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
Junior Recruits were subject to the same disciplinary regime as adult sailors under the Naval Discipline Act 1957 (UK) 5 and 6 Eliz 2 Ch 3 and subsequently the Defence Force Discipline Act 1982 (Cth). As such, they were subject to formal punishments authorised by these Acts as well as the Manual of Instructions for the Junior Recruits Training Establishment: ABR 697 (promulgated April 1960 incorporating Amendment No 4 May 1962) (‘Junior Recruits’ Manual of Instructions (1960)'), the Manual of Instructions for the Junior Recruits Training Establishment: ABR 697/1967 (December 1967 superseding the 1960 version) (‘Junior Recruits’ Manual of Instructions (1967)’) (copies provided to the Taskforce by Defence on 12 April 2013) and other applicable Naval regulations at the time. These included, for example, regulations dealing with stoppage of leave or pay, extra hours of work or drill, or dismissal.

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Defence Abuse Response Taskforce, HMAS Leeuwin Report, note 64, p 18.

Above.

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Leading Seaman, early 1960s, HMAS Sydney, [Name redacted].

Male [Rank redacted], HMAS Perth II, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Able Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Melbourne, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Melbourne, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Brisbane, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Melbourne, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Melbourne, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Seaman, HMAS Melbourne, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Melbourne, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman, HMAS Stirling, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Brisbane, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Kuttabul, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Kuttabul, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female Seaman, HMAS Albatross, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Female Able Seaman, HMAS Success, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Able Seaman, HMAS Success, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, early 1960s, [Name redacted].
Female Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman, HMAS Kuttabul, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Leading Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Cerberus, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Chief Petty Officer, HMAS Cerberus, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
Female Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
Female Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Cerberus, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].
Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].
Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Kuttabul, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Kuttabul, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Leading Seaman, HMAS Kuttabul, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Kuttabul, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Kuttabul, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Kuttabul, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Kuttabul, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Kuttabul, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Kuttabul, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Kuttabul, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
Female Able Seaman, HMAS Success, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
Female Leading Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Kuttabul, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
Female Leading Seaman, HMAS Sydney, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
Female Leading Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
Female Able Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Petty Officer, [Locations redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, HMAS Sydney, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
For example, Female Seaman, HMAS Kuttabul, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted] late 1970s, [Name redacted].
Female Able Seaman, HMAS Nirimba, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Female Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Albatross, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Seaman, HMAS Success, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Success, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
Male Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Adelaide, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Leading Hand, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
16. COMPLAINTS OF ABUSE IN THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

303 Male Leading Hand, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
304 Male Leading Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
305 Male Leading Hand, [Location redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted].
306 Male Seaman, HMAS Success, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Sydney, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
307 Male Able Seaman, HMAS Adelaide, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Melbourne, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
308 Male Able Seaman, HMAS Perth, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
309 Male Leading Hand, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
310 Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].
311 Male Able Seaman, HMAS Adelaide, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
312 Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].
313 Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, early 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male [Rank redacted], HMAS Albatross, early 1960s, [Name redacted].
314 Male Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
315 Male Able Seaman, HMAS Sydney, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
316 Male Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
317 Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
318 Male Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
319 Male Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
320 Male Able Seaman, HMAS Perth, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
321 Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, early 1960s, [Name redacted].
322 Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
323 Male Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
324 Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman, HMAS Sydney, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
325 Male Able Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
326 Male Able Seaman, HMAS Kuttabul, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
327 Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
328 See, for example, Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Nirimba, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
329 Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Cerberus, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
330 Male Seaman, HMAS Adelaide, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
331 Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Brisbane, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
332 Male Able Seaman, HMAS Brisbane, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
333 Male Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].
334 Male Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
335 Male Seaman, HMAS Melbourne, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
336 See, for example, Male [Rank redacted], HMAS Melbourne, late 1950s, [Name redacted].
337 Male Seaman, HMAS Melbourne, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
338 Male [Rank redacted], HMAS Melbourne, late 1950s, [Name redacted].
339 Male Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
340 Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1960s, [Name redacted].
341 Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].
342 Male [Rank redacted], HMAS Melbourne, late 1950s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Brisbane, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
343 Male [Rank redacted], HMAS Melbourne, late 1950s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Stalwart, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
344 Female Seaman, HMAS Success, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
345 Male Able Seaman, HMAS Nirimba, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
346 Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
347 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
348 Male Seaman, HMAS Success, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Success, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
349 Male Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].
350 Male Seaman, HMAS Success, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
351 Male Seaman, HMAS Success, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
352 Male Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].
353 Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
354 Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
355 Male Able Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
356 Female Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
357 Male Seaman, HMAS Anzac, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
358 See, for example, Male Able Seaman, HMAS Supply, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Melbourne, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
359 Male Seaman, HMAS Albatross, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
360 See, for example, Male Lieutenant, HMAS Sydney IV, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
361 Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney III, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
362 Female Leading Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
363 Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
364 Male Able Seaman, HMAS Perth, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
365 Female Able Seaman, HMAS Sydney, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
366 Male Seaman, HMAS Adelaide, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
367 Male Seaman, HMAS Brisbane, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
368 Male Able Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
369 Female Seaman, HMAS Albatross, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Kuttabul, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
370 Female Seaman, HMAS Kuttabul, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male [Rank redacted], HMAS Albatross, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Midshipman, [Locations redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
371 Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
372 Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].
373 Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
374 Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
375 Female Seaman, HMAS Albatross, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male [Rank redacted], HMAS Albatross, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
376 Female Seaman, HMAS Albatross, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
377 Female Seaman, HMAS Vendetta, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
378 Female Leading Seaman, HMAS Kuttabul, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Lieutenant, HMAS Sydney, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
379 Male Able Seaman, HMAS Brisbane, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
380 Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Kuttabul, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
381 Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Kuttabul, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
382 Male Seaman, HMAS Melbourne, early 1960s, [Name redacted].
383 Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
384 Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
385 Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
386 Male Midshipman, HMAS Melbourne, late 1950s, [Name redacted]; Female Sub-Lieutenant, HMAS Cerberus, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
387 Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
388 Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Albatross, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Albatross, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], HMAS Albatross, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Sub-Lieutenant, HMAS Albatross, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Duchess, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Lieutenant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Sydney, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Sub-Lieutenant, HMAS Albatross, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Lieutenant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman, HMAS Albatross, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male [Rank redacted], HMAS Albatross, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Albatross, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Perth, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Leading Seaman, HMAS Stirling, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted].


This was the case on the following ships: HMAS Sydney III, HMAS Melbourne II, and HMAS Brisbane II.

Male Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Perth II, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Leading Seaman, HMAS Perth, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Success II, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Brisbane II, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Brisbane II, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Success II, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Perth II, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Perth II, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Perth II, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Brisbane II, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Brisbane II, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male [Rank redacted], HMAS Melbourne II, late 1950s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Perth II, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Perth II, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Perth II, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Brisbane II, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Brisbane II, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Able Seaman, HMAS Success II, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Able Seaman, HMAS Success II, early 2000s, [Name redacted].


165 Above, p xiii.
166 Above, p xv.
168 Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
169 Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
170 Male Navy member, HMAS Nirimba and [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].
171 Female Navy member, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
172 Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
17. Complaints of abuse in the Australian Army

17.1 Background to the Army

(a) Historical background

The Australian Army (Army) is Australia’s military land force and forms part of the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

The Army is one of the nation’s oldest institutions. Prior to Federation, each of the Australian colonies had their own armies. However on 1 March 1901, the Commonwealth Government assumed responsibility for matters of defence and the colonial armies were integrated into a national army: the Commonwealth Military Forces. Over the next 47 years, the Australian Military Forces, as they became known, remained a part-time force of citizen soldiers with only a small regular component (paid full-time soldiers), and were restricted to service on Australian territory. Two special volunteer forces were formed during the two World Wars. After World War II, the Australian Military Forces underwent a structural reorganisation, the results of which remain in place today. In September 1947, the Australian Regular Army was formed, which was to be supported by the reorganised Citizen Military Forces. Since this time, the full-time component of the Army has grown considerably, while the part-time civilian unit has shrunk. In 1980, the Citizen Military Forces adopted their current title: the Australian Army.

(b) Key establishments

(i) Recruit and employment training establishments

There are several key recruit and employment training establishments in the Army, including Kapooka Army Base, Puckapunyal Military Area, the Army Apprentice School and the Royal Military College.

Blamey Barracks is located within Kapooka, an outer suburb of Wagga Wagga, New South Wales. The main function of this base is the Army Recruit Training Centre (ARTC Kapooka), originally established in 1951 as the 1st Recruit Training Battalion, and still in operation today. All regular Army personnel are required to undertake an 80 day initial training course at ARTC Kapooka which trains entrants in core military knowledge and skills. Initially an all-male training establishment, female recruits have trained alongside males at ARTC Kapooka since 1985.

Puckapunyal Military Area, widely known as ‘Pucka’, is a major Army training facility located near Seymour in Victoria. Established in the early 1940s, the base has been used for a wide range of training activities including some programs directed at new Army entrants. For example, during the 1950s and the Vietnam War, conscripted servicemen completed initial military training at Puckapunyal Military Area. In addition, many young individuals of junior ranks undertake Initial Employment Training at this facility.

The Army Apprentice School formed an alternative entry path into the Australian Army between 1948 and 1995, the period during which the Army Apprentice Scheme was in operation. Originally located at Balcombe Barracks on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria, the Army Apprentice School was later relocated to Latchford Barracks, Bonegilla, in northern Victoria. During its operation, the Army Apprentice School recruited apprentices as young as 14 years of age to undertake apprenticeships over a four-year period in a wide variety of trades.

The Royal Military College (RMC) was opened at Duntroon, Canberra on 27 June 1911 and constitutes the Army’s primary Officer Training facility. At RMC, cadets are inducted into the Corps of Staff Cadets, a hierarchical organisation structurally based on an infantry battalion. For a period of time, RMC offered Bachelor degrees in addition to military training. However, upon the establishment of the Australian Defence Force Academy in 1986, RMC’s curriculum was condensed to 18 months of pure military studies.
(ii) Regular service

The Taskforce received a large number of complaints involving several other Army establishments, including Lavarack Barracks, Gallipoli Barracks, Holsworthy Barracks, and Robertson Barracks.

Lavarack Barracks is a major Army base located under Mount Stuart, 12 kilometres from the Townsville CBD in Queensland. Opened in 1966, the base is home to about 4500 soldiers and 280 civilian employees. Lavarack Barracks houses the 3rd Brigade, which forms the major combat component of the ADF’s Ready Deployment Force. The base is also home to the 11th Brigade.

Gallipoli Barracks is one of Australia’s largest military bases, located in the north-western Brisbane suburb of Enoggera in Queensland. The Department of Defence first acquired land at Enoggera for an Army camp in 1910, which it used for field training, and Gallipoli Barracks has remained in continuous military use since. Today, it is home to the majority of the 7th Brigade units.

Holsworthy Barracks is another major Army base located in south-west Sydney, New South Wales. Having operated since 1910, Holsworthy Barracks has historically constituted Australia’s largest Army barracks. However, it has recently down-sized due to the relocation of the 1st Brigade to Darwin in 1998, and the recent departure of 3rd Battalion to Townsville in 2011. Holsworthy Barracks is now home to several Army Reserve units, Special Forces Units, and the 6th Aviation Regiment.

Robertson Barracks is the Army’s major establishment in the Northern Territory and is located in the outer Darwin suburb of Holtze. Robertson Barracks was built during the 1990s as part of the Army Presence in the North project, and is now home to the 1st Brigade and a number of Defence lodger units.

(c) Number and diversity of personnel

Today, Army personnel make up around 51 per cent of the total ADF Permanent Forces (in 2011-2012, the average funded strength of the Army Permanent Force was 29,697 personnel). Around 10 per cent of this population are female, and approximately six per cent of the members of the Army Permanent Force come from a non-English speaking background, with one per cent who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The Australian Women’s Army Service (AWAS) was formed in August 1941 to alleviate personnel shortages resulting from men being assigned to combat roles. Post war, it was determined that there was no need for women’s service in the Army, and during 1947, all members of the AWAS were demobilised. However, in 1951, facing an acute personnel shortage, the Women’s Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC) was formed. In the late 1970s, female soldiers began to be integrated into the Army at large, and in early 1984, the WRAAC was disbanded. Over the last 30 years, the Army has moved from a recommendation in the early 1970s to permit women to serve on active service but not in combat roles, to the removal of gender restrictions entirely in 2013.

The age limits set for enlistment in the Army have differed over time. During World War I, recruits were required to be at least 18 years old. By the start of World War II, the minimum age limit had been raised to 20 years, although this was lowered to 19 years in 1941, and then to 18 years in 1943. However, recruits under the age of 21 years still faced certain restrictions, namely, they required written parental consent to enlist, were not permitted to go to New Guinea or the Northern Territory, and those under 20 years had to undergo six months of training before being posted to a unit. Today, the minimum age for entry into the Army is 17 years.
17.2 Overview of complaints of abuse in the Army

Yes, I thought, funny how these times,
seemingly long buried,
come to the surface,
crying out not to be silenced –
and the Army, yes,
and me a spunky twenty-one year old,
and have the stories, the real stories,
been told of what it has done
to young men?51

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 2224 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse experienced by more than 1650 complainants during their time in Defence. This includes 879 cases of abuse in the Army, experienced by more than 650 complainants.

It is important to note that the Taskforce has categorised the abuse experienced by each complainant as forming one or more ‘cases’ of abuse. Many complainants experienced multiple cases of abuse. One case generally relates to abuse experienced at one location (occasionally abuse experienced over a number of locations may be classed as one case of abuse if it is part of an ongoing campaign of abuse). The statistical information provided below is based on the number of cases of abuse in the Army. The discussion of abuse throughout this section generally refers to the number of complainants, or individuals, who experienced a particular type or form of abuse during their time in the Army.

In this report, the Taskforce provides a separate analysis of the abuse reported to have occurred during initial recruit and employment training to that experienced by members of Defence in regular service. This is due to the significant number of complaints of abuse that occurred in recruit and employment training establishments, and because the abuse in these establishments raises some specific issues.

The analysis of abuse reported to have occurred at Army recruit and employment training establishments is based on a close review of complaints received by 246 complainants which raised at least one plausible allegation of abuse that occurred at one of the following locations: the Army Recruit Training Centre (ARTC Kapooka) (117 complainants), the Army Apprentice School (65 complainants), the Royal Military College (RMC) (37 complainants), and Puckapunyal Military Area (41 complainants). A number of complainants experienced abuse at more than one of these locations.

Analysis of the complaints of abuse that occurred while complainants were undertaking initial recruit and employment training in the Army reveals a disturbing pattern of abuse. Many complainants experienced multiple types of abuse, with particularly high rates of harassment and bullying as well as physical abuse. This frequently occurred on an ongoing basis, often involving individuals of equal or marginally higher rank, within the context of hazing or initiation practices. This was particularly common in complaints of abuse at the Army Apprentice School and RMC, and has noticeable parallels to the abuse reported by complainants at several Navy and Air Force training establishments. Complainants also experienced abuse by members of training staff, often during formal training hours, and involving verbal abuse, denial of medical treatment, and harsh training and disciplinary practices. There were also a significant number of complainants who reported serious physical assault, sexual abuse or ongoing sexual harassment involving at least one staff member.

The Taskforce also received complaints of abuse that occurred while individuals were undertaking regular Army service. In order to provide a detailed summary of the nature of the abuse in regular service, the Taskforce undertook a close review of the complaints of abuse that occurred at the establishments which the highest number of complaints (or which for some other reason warranted close review). This involved the review of complaints received by 169 complainants which raised at least one plausible allegation of abuse that occurred during regular Army service at the following locations: Lavarack Barracks (60 complainants), Holsworthy Barracks (38 complainants), Gallipoli Barracks (37 complainants), and Robertson Barracks (19 complainants), as well as a small number of complainants who were undertaking regular service at Puckapunyal Military Area, Latchford Barracks, RMC or Blamey Barracks at the time of the abuse. A number of complainants experienced abuse at more than one of these locations.
The review of these complaints revealed some patterns in the abuse reported by complainants who were in regular service in the Army at the time of the abuse. The most common form of abuse experienced at these locations was harassment and bullying, followed by physical abuse. Many complainants who were undertaking regular service at the time of the abuse were very young and of a relatively junior rank, such as Private or Corporal, and experienced abuse from their peers and members of the Army of higher rank. Common forms of harassment and bullying included verbal abuse, unreasonable tasking, harsh disciplinary practices, interference with career progression, and social exclusion. Complainants frequently reported that they were targeted for abuse because of attributes that marked them out as different, including gender, age, perceived weakness and workplace performance, or related to illness or injury.

The overwhelming majority of complainants who experienced abuse in the Army were men, both during initial recruit and employment training and in regular service. However, women were overrepresented in complaints of abuse, compared to their approximately 18 per cent representation in the Army currently. In particular, women formed the majority of complainants who experienced abuse that occurred after 2000.

Female complainants commonly experienced sexual abuse, with particularly high rates of sexual assault and indecent assault. Many female complainants also experienced ongoing sexual harassment, often involving an alleged abuser of higher rank. Female complainants comprised the majority of complainants who reported sexual harassment to the Taskforce, despite representing a significant minority in the overall number of complainants who reported abuse to the Taskforce.

The statistics which appear in the descriptions of abuse below have been drawn from complaints at the locations regarding which the Taskforce received the highest number of complaints. These figures do not represent the total number of complaints received by the Taskforce of abuse within the Army. Rather, they are used to represent trends and patterns in the abuse that has occurred over time. It should also be noted that the statistical information cited in this report pertains only to abuse reported to the Taskforce and is not able to be extrapolated to make broader conclusions about the nature and levels of abuse occurring within the Army, due to the inherent limitations in the statistics collected. Despite these limitations, the statistics drawn from the complaints of abuse assessed by the Taskforce are useful in understanding and illuminating the prevalence of various types of abuse occurring within the Army.

The sections below provide a summary of some of the key features of abuse reported to the Taskforce by complainants who served in the Army, including:

- a statistical overview of abuse in the Army;
- complaints of abuse in Army recruit and employment training establishments;
- complaints of abuse during regular Army service;
- locational case studies (Army Apprentice School and ARTC Kapooka); and
- individual case studies.

### 17.3 Statistical overview of complaints of abuse in the Army

#### (a) Number of cases

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 879 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse in the Army (relating to more than 650 complainants).

This was the highest number of cases received from the three services, and accounted for 40 per cent of all plausible cases of abuse assessed by the Taskforce. Despite this, the Army was slightly underrepresented compared to its total numbers of personnel. As discussed in section 15.5(c) above, since the 1990s, Army personnel have accounted for around 50 per cent of the ADF Permanent Forces. In decades prior they often accounted for even more. The proportion of Army personnel is even higher when taking into account Army Reservists, who vastly outnumber Navy or Air Force Reservists.
(b) Abuse by decade

Complainants to the Taskforce experienced abuse in the Army between 1942 and 2011. The numbers of cases of abuse in the Army peaked in 1980s, then fell during the 1990s and 2000s. Cases relating to abuse in the Army have accounted for the highest number of cases of all of the services since the 1980s. Between 2000 and 2011, cases involving abuse in the Army accounted for 38 per cent of all plausible cases of abuse assessed by the Taskforce.

Graph 30: Army cases by decade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940–1949</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950–1959</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960–1969</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970–1979</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980–1989</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990–1999</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000–2009</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010–2011</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) Abuse by sex of the complainant

Men were the complainants in 655 cases relating to abuse in the Army (75 per cent of Army cases), while women were the complainants in 224 cases of abuse in the Army (25 per cent of Army cases).

Although lower in total number, women in the Army were overrepresented as complainants compared to the proportion of women serving in the Army. Women were the complainants in 25 per cent of Army cases, yet in 2010-2011, women made up only 10 per cent of all Army personnel, the smallest proportion of any service. Historically, women in the Army have comprised even less than this.

Graph 31: Percentage of male and female Army personnel (2010–2011) compared to percentage of male and female cases of abuse over whole time period

- Percentage of Army personnel by sex 2010–11
- Percentage of Army cases by sex reported to the Taskforce
In cases of abuse in the Army, abuse of men peaked in the 1980s (179 cases), while abuse of women peaked in the 1990s (66 cases). In cases relating to abuse in the Army that occurred between 1990 and 2011, when more women were serving in Defence, women were the complainants in 37 per cent of cases, while men were the complainants in 63 per cent of cases.

**Graph 32: Sex of the complainant by decade (Army)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940–1949</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950–1959</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960–1969</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970–1979</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980–1989</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990–1999</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000–2009</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010–2011</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Unknown</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**[d] Types of abuse**

As with all three services, harassment and bullying was the type of abuse most commonly experienced in the Army, followed by physical abuse, sexual abuse, and finally sexual harassment. Of cases relating to abuse that occurred in the Army:

- 287 cases involved sexual abuse (33 per cent of Army cases);
- 135 cases involved sexual harassment (15 per cent);
- 428 cases involved physical abuse (49 per cent); and
- 580 cases involved harassment and bullying (66 per cent).

**Graph 33: Army cases by type of abuse**
A lower percentage of Army cases involved sexual abuse than those in the Navy and Air Force (33 per cent of Army cases, 44 per cent of Navy cases, and 34 per cent of Air Force cases). Similarly, a lower percentage of Army cases involved sexual harassment (15 per cent of Army cases, 17 per cent of Navy cases, and 21 per cent of Air Force cases). The percentage of Army cases that involved physical abuse was high, with nearly half of all Army cases involving physical abuse (428 out of 879 cases). This was significantly higher than the proportion of Air Force cases that involved physical abuse, but slightly lower than Navy cases involving physical abuse (49 per cent of Army cases, 54 per cent of Navy cases, 38 per cent of Air Force cases). The percentage of Army cases that involved harassment and bullying was similar to that of the Navy and the Air Force, as shown in the graph below.

Levels of sexual abuse in the Army peaked in the 1980s and sexual harassment peaked in the 1990s, with fewer cases involving sexual abuse and sexual harassment between 2000 and 2011, as shown in the graph below. As noted in section 15.5(e) above, cases of abuse occurring in the Army since the 1980s made up the greatest number of physical abuse cases, both in terms of total numbers of cases and as a percentage of all cases for each service. This remained the same for abuse occurring after 2000, where cases of physical abuse accounted for 32 per cent of all Army cases, compared with 22 per cent of Navy cases, and 26 per cent of Air Force cases. As with the other two services, harassment and bullying was more prominent in Army cases of abuse that occurred in more recent years, compared to other types of abuse. Of cases of abuse in the Army that occurred between 2000 and 2011, for example, 80 per cent involved harassment and bullying (146 cases), while 32 per cent involved physical abuse, 18 per cent involved sexual abuse, and 14 per cent involved sexual harassment.
Graph 35: Army cases by type of abuse by decade

Women and men in the Army experienced different types of abuse. Women were more likely than men to have experienced sexual abuse and sexual harassment, and men were more likely than women to have experienced physical abuse and harassment and bullying.

In cases of abuse in the Army:

- 50 per cent of women experienced sexual abuse (113 cases), compared to 27 per cent of men (174 cases);
- 42 per cent of women experienced sexual harassment (95 cases), compared to six per cent of men (40 cases);
- 21 per cent of women experienced physical abuse (46 cases), compared to 58 per cent of men (382 cases); and
- 57 per cent of women experienced harassment and bullying (128 cases), compared to 69 per cent of men (452 cases).

17.4 Complaints of abuse in Army recruit and employment training establishments

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 879 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse within the Army (40 per cent of all cases), experienced by more than 650 complainants.

It is important to note that the Taskforce has categorised the abuse experienced by each complainant as forming one or more ‘cases’ of abuse. Many complainants experienced multiple cases of abuse. One case generally relates to abuse experienced at one location (occasionally abuse experienced over a number of locations may be classed as one case of abuse if it is part of an ongoing campaign of abuse). The discussion of abuse throughout this section generally refers to the number of complainants, or individuals, who experienced a particular type or form of abuse during their time in the Army.

As discussed in section 15.1(a) above, in this report, complaints of abuse that occurred during initial recruit and employment training are considered separately to those that occurred during regular service. This is because of the significant number of these complaints and because these complaints raise special issues.

The Taskforce received a significant number of complaints of abuse that occurred while complainants were undertaking initial training upon entry into the Army as recruits, trainees, cadets and apprentices.

The Taskforce conducted a close review of complaints received by 246 complainants regarding abuse that occurred during initial recruit or employment training in the Army at the following locations: the Army Recruit Training Centre (ARTC Kapooka) (117 complainants), the Army Apprentice School (65 complainants), the Royal Military College (RMC) (37 complainants), and Puckapunyal Military Area (41 complainants). A number of complainants experienced abuse at more than one location.
The summary below is based on information provided by the 246 complainants who were undertaking initial recruit and employment training at these locations. It is important to note that where figures are given, they only relate to complaints of abuse experienced by people who were undertaking initial training at these locations. These figures do not represent the total number of complaints received by the Taskforce regarding abuse during initial training in the Army. Rather, they are used to represent trends and patterns in the abuse that has occurred over time.

The Taskforce received reports of abuse that occurred at Army recruit and employment training establishments between the early 1950s and 2011. There were particularly high rates of abuse which occurred during the 1970s and 1980s. Complainants who attended the Army Apprentice School or RMC also reported high rates of abuse occurring during the 1960s. The most common form of abuse reported to the Taskforce was harassment and bullying, which often occurred in combination with acts of physical abuse. However, female complainants were more likely to experience sexual abuse and sexual harassment, and were overrepresented in the number of complainants who reported abuse that occurred in the Army after the 1990s.

Much of the abuse experienced by male complainants at Army recruit and training establishments was carried out by groups of more senior apprentices or cadets against newer intakes, and arose in the context of hazing or initiation practices. In these cases, abuse was often witnessed by other peers, adding to the humiliation of the complainant and reinforcing fear amongst witnesses that they could be the next to be targeted. This type of abuse typically occurred outside of formal training hours, often while the complainant was asleep in bed. As a result, a number of complainants reported that they had difficulty sleeping throughout the duration of their training. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

I was not given any relief or break even at night. I would hope that the physical and mental abuse would at least stall for long enough to allow me to get some sleep and recover and be able to prepare for the following day in training or whatever tasks were planned. Such preparation never happened. I was always extremely tired due to forcing myself to remain alert and awake during “sleeping” hours so as to be prepared for the regular intruders.56

This was particularly common in complaints of abuse relating to the Army Apprentice School and RMC. The high rates of abuse carried out by groups of senior peers at the Army Apprentice School and at RMC can be partly attributed to the structure of these training establishments. In particular, individuals typically undertook training at these locations over a period of three to four years. At both locations, senior apprentices or cadets were often placed in formal positions of authority which gave them certain responsibilities over newer intakes. As a result, many complainants described a clear hierarchy between senior and junior apprentices or cadets. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

At the RMC most, if not all, of the authority was vested in the hands of the senior recruits on a seemingly unsupervised basis. They ruled every moment of my life at RMC and seemed intent on trying to outdo each other in devising the most inane and degrading methods of humiliation they could impose on the junior cadets. Most of these methods had some sort of sexually oriented basis. Others seemed to be designed for the maximum enjoyment of the perpetrators and maximum demoralisation of the recipient. The RMC culture maintained and enforced these abuses.57

This structure can be contrasted to locations such as ARTC Kapooka, where recruits would generally spend a maximum of 80 days in training, and senior recruits did not exercise formal positions of authority over members from newer intakes.

A large number of complainants across all training establishments also experienced abuse that involved members of staff. In many of these cases, the abuse reported to the Taskforce was directly carried out by members of staff. Other complainants told the Taskforce that though some or all of the abuse they experienced was directly carried out by their peers, it was unofficially condoned or in some cases actively encouraged by members of staff. For example, a number of complainants from ARTC Kapooka reported having been singled out for poor performance during training by a staff member who then urged other recruits to ‘show [them] how its done tonight’, resulting in a physical assault by a group of recruits during the night.58

Many complainants who experienced abuse at Army recruit and employment training establishments told the Taskforce of being targeted for abuse by groups of their peers on the basis that they were in some way ‘different’ to the rest of their cohort. In particular, complainants reported that they were targeted on the basis of gender, race, religious beliefs, physical attributes or perceived physical weakness, or as a result of having previously made a formal report of abuse to Defence.
The sections below provide a summary of the main types of abuse experienced during initial recruit and employment training at the Army locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce.

[a] Sexual abuse in Army recruit and employment training establishments

He pushed me over the table I was wiping, pinning me against it. He then started putting his hands between my legs and over my genital area. I was paralysed with fear and couldn’t even make a sound, I just froze. … I didn’t want to report the incident – I just wanted to forget it ever happened.59

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 287 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual abuse within the Army (33 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Army).

Of the 246 complainants who experienced abuse during initial recruit or employment training in the Army at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 79 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual abuse (32 per cent of complaints reviewed). This includes complaints of sexual abuse during initial training from 56 male complainants and 23 female complainants. The Taskforce received a significantly high number of complaints involving sexual abuse at the Army Apprentice School (28 complainants), and ARTC Kapooka (30 complainants).

The Taskforce received complaints of sexual abuse that occurred between the 1950s and late 2000s, with the highest rates of sexual abuse during the 1970s and 1980s. However, there are significant differences in complainants’ experiences of sexual abuse between earlier and later decades. In particular, a substantial majority of sexual abuse during the 1960s and 1970s occurred at the Army Apprentice School. This type of abuse was typically characterised by hazing or initiation practices carried out by groups of more senior apprentices against newer intakes, and often carried out in addition to other forms of harassment and bullying or physical abuse.

By contrast, the reports of sexual abuse that took place after the 1980s were more evenly spread across various training establishments. The highest number of complaints of sexual abuse related to ARTC Kapooka, though there were also consistent allegations across decades from Puckapunyal Military Area, RMC and a few later cases involving sexual abuse at the Army Apprentice School. Some of these complainants experienced sexual abuse that occurred in the context of hazing or initiation practices carried out by senior peers. However, the Taskforce also received a number of complaints of sexual abuse involving single and multiple alleged abusers of varied ranks. Many complaints of sexual abuse that occurred after the 1980s involved serious allegations of sexual abuse, with high rates of sexual assault and indecent assault. Complaints from this period often involved sexual abuse carried out by members of training staff as well as individual peers.

There were also significant differences in the experiences of sexual abuse between male and female complainants at Army recruit and employment training establishments. Although women accounted for a smaller proportion of complaints of sexual abuse (23 complainants), female complainants experienced most incidents of sexual abuse at Army recruit or employment training establishments from the 1990s onwards (14 out of 21 complainants), and almost all complaints of sexual abuse during the 2000s [seven out of eight complainants]. This is particularly significant given that women only really began training at establishments such as RMC, ARTC Kapooka, Puckapunyal Military Area and the Army Apprentice School during the 1980s, and the proportion of females training and serving within the Army has historically been relatively low.

Sexual abuse experienced by female complainants was overwhelmingly characterised by sexual assault or indecent assault [21 complainants], usually carried out by a single alleged abuser [18 complainants]. Most alleged abusers were of a higher rank to the complainant, suggesting that there was a significant power imbalance at the time of the abuse. In addition, many female complainants reported that they experienced sexual abuse in the context of ongoing sexual harassment. This is discussed further in section 17.4(b).

The nature of the sexual abuse experienced during Army recruit and employment training is discussed below, including sexual assault, indecent assault, as well as other forms of sexual abuse.
(i) **Sexual assault**

As I was showering five or six senior [others] attacked me – they turned off the lights, tied my hands behind my back and proceeded to do things to me. I was held down whilst one of them put his penis in my buttocks, they were all laughing. Then they proceeded to masturbate on me. I was absolutely shocked, at that age I had never even known about things like this. I guess I started to block it out as soon as it happened.60

The Taskforce received a number of complaints involving serious acts of sexual assault that occurred in Army recruit and employment training establishments (29 complainants). This included 19 male complainants and 10 female complainants. In all cases of sexual assault, the abuse was carried out by male alleged abusers.

There are noticeable differences between the experiences of sexual assault reported by female complainants and male complainants. The majority of female complainants who experienced sexual assault reported that it occurred during the 1990s or 2000s (eight complainants). Sexual assault experienced by female complainants was usually carried out by a single alleged abuser [nine complainants], the majority of whom were members of a higher rank to the complainant at the time of the abuse.

All female complainants who experienced sexual assault during initial Army training reported having been subjected to non-consensual vaginal61 or anal62 penetration by an alleged abuser’s penis, digital penetration, or forced oral sex.63 For most complainants, the sexual assault also involved physical abuse, such as being overpowered and pinned down or otherwise physically constrained.64

By contrast, most cases of sexual assault reported by male complainants occurred during the 1970s and 1980s, with only one complaint of abuse occurring after 2000. Sexual assault of male complainants frequently involved multiple alleged abusers and was often witnessed by fellow trainees or apprentices.

Male complainants typically experienced sexual assault involving penetration by an object, which occurred in a broader context of harassment and bullying or physical abuse carried out by their peers. For example, at least seven complainants who experienced sexual assault at the Army Apprentice School described a ritual whereby a group of senior apprentices would insert a broom or mop handle into a junior apprentice’s anus. One complainant reported that the broom handle was then used as a vault ‘to somersault me over and forward on to the bed, where I was punched and thumped’.65

Similar practices were also experienced by complainants at other Army training establishments, though seemingly on a more sporadic basis. One complainant who served in the Army during the early 1970s described how shaving cream was applied to his rectum and a broken feather duster was inserted into his anus. He told the Taskforce:

> It was to mimic me having a tail and wagging it as I walked. I found this to be incredibly degrading and upsetting, especially for someone so young.66

Another complainant described being anally penetrated with a vacuum cleaner hose while undertaking training in the early 2000s:

> They began with [my friend]. Together, they [harassed my friend]. When I told them to stop, they attacked me. [One of the men] grabbed me and gave me a wedgie until my undies broke, then he pushed me onto the bed. He then picked up a vacuum cleaner pipe and bent me over. He pushed it in between my buttock cheeks until it began to push up my anus.67

In addition, nine male complainants reported sexual assault involving anal penetration by an alleged abuser’s penis68 or fingers,69 or being forced to perform oral sex.70 These cases were fairly evenly spread throughout the 1960s to 1990s, and involved alleged abusers of a variety of ranks, including senior peers and some members of training staff. Most incidents occurred when the complainant was in their first year of training.

A number of male complainants also experienced acts of physical abuse in the lead up to, during, or after the sexual assault. This often involved threats of physical violence, either to ensure that complainants complied with the abuse,71 or to ensure that complainants did not report the sexual assault.72 Some complainants reported being subjected to particularly violent incidents of sexual assault. For example, one complainant described being punched and kicked in the head multiple times by a group of alleged abusers, who then pinned him down and inserted fingers into his anus while chanting...
Another complainant reported that while training at Puckapunyal Military Area, he was grabbed around the neck and dragged backwards out of a bath, before being bent over the bath tub and having a broom handle inserted into his anus.

Other complainants, both male and female, told the Taskforce that the alleged abuser made threats against their career in order to enable the abuse or prevent the complainant from reporting the abuse. This was especially the case when the alleged abuser was of higher rank and took advantage of their position of power and authority.

The Taskforce received a number of complaints of sexual assault that involved the consumption of alcohol or other substances (11 complainants). Many complainants reported that they felt pressured to consume alcohol, often by their alleged abusers in the lead up to a sexual assault. Some complainants told the Taskforce that their drink was spiked prior to the sexual assault, and that they were unconscious for all or part of the assault. This experience was described by one complainant who returned to an Army location in the late 2000s after a night of drinking, and was offered what she thought was a glass of water:

At this point he pushed my shoulders down, so I was laying on his bed, it was only a single bed so it was very close quarters, I was up against the wall and he then laid on the bed beside me, trying to kiss me again. I was very tired and was saying I wanted to go to my bed and go to sleep. [He] just kept trying to kiss me. It was at this point that I think I fell asleep, I awoke a short time later to him trying to undo my jeans and pull them down, I told [him] to stop and I pulled my jeans back up and zipped and buttoned them. I then tried to roll over and get off the bed. [He] held me down, I tried to resist but I was unable to. It was then I fell asleep again, the next time I woke [he] was on top of me, my clothes had been removed, and he was having sex with me. I started to cry, and I covered my face with a pillow, I then fell asleep again, I am unsure if I was drugged or not, but I was passing out and I don’t know why, I was tired but not to the point where I was falling asleep, then I just couldn’t stay awake. I was woken up by [him] grabbing my neck and opening my mouth, he then came into my mouth and then just lied down and went to sleep.

Some complainants who reported sexual assault carried out by other peers undertaking training implied that the sexual assault they experienced happened with the knowledge or in some cases encouragement of staff members. For example, a number of complainants reported having been recorded or filmed by others during an incident of sexual assault, which was later viewed by both members of staff and other peers. This was described by one complainant who was forced to perform oral sex on a male peer, under an explicit threat of physical violence. The complainant told the Taskforce that a witness took photographs during the incident, which were then ‘circulated not only to other recruits, but also to Army instructors’.

(ii) Indecent assault

He was standing behind me. He pulled down the Y front underpants I was wearing and carefully spread my arse cheeks with both hands. He touched my buttocks, inner thighs and scrotum. Fairly soon after this he only had one hand on my buttocks. I looked around and saw that he had his penis out of the fly of his overalls and he was masturbating.

Indecent assault was the most common form of sexual abuse experienced by complainants at Army recruit and employment training establishments (51 complainants). This includes 36 male complainants and 15 female complainants. Most of these complainants told the Taskforce of having been subjected to at least one incident of indecent assault, the majority of which occurred during the 1970s and 1980s, carried out by a single alleged abuser in a position of perceived or actual authority to the complainant.

Complainants told the Taskforce of indecent assault that included being fondled or stroked in the breast or genital region, forced touching of an alleged abuser’s genitals, inappropriate kissing, or being made to play with their own genitals while others watched. At least three complainants described being masturbated on by a group of alleged abusers, and one complainant reported that an alleged abuser repeatedly slapped the complainant across the face with his penis until he got an erection.

For most complainants, incidents of indecent assault also involved an element of forced nudity. This included being ordered to take off their clothes in order to have their genitals or breasts touched or inspected by the alleged abuser.
Some complainants reported that this was carried out as a form of entertainment and witnessed by a group of their peers in order to add to their humiliation. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce of the following incident which occurred at ARTC Kapooka in the late 1980s:

Within the first few days of arriving at Kapooka, I was made to strip naked, while standing on a table in front of several others (including a female). I was then asked to perform sexually explicit actions, including bending over to show my anus and playing with my genitals, while they laughed and made degrading and humiliating comments about my body and genitals, the length of my penis and my body hair.91

Many complainants reported that they were targeted for abuse outside of training hours and while in particularly vulnerable positions. For instance, a number of complainants told the Taskforce of having been indecently assaulted while in the shower,92 while using the toilets,93 or while asleep in bed.94 One complainant described the fear and lasting impact of this experience:

One night during a bad week, I woke to find one of the seniors in my bed. He had a hand on my genitals and he warned me that one night he would come back and I would be his personal boy. ... This event had a huge impact on me. I was in fear of being raped or even pack sodomised some time in the next seven months, this horrified me.95

Some complainants reported experiencing indecent assault involving multiple alleged abusers, and witnessed by a group of their peers.96 For example, one female complainant described the following incident that occurred while attending a training camp:

One afternoon ... one of the men told me to go to one of the disused old huts on the pretext of having a meeting there. When I got in there a group of males (there were about four of them) grabbed me and threw me on a single bed. They then tied me to the bed and despite my screaming and struggling to get free they stood around laughing for some time. Then one of them touched my breast and I got really upset and told them to let me go but they just kept laughing and then one of them started grabbing the buttons on my khaki pants. Then I got really upset and started panicking and screamed again and fortunately [the Platoon leader] came in and ordered the boys to stop and to set me free. I was really shaken by this incident as if he hadn’t come past at that time I am positive I would have been sexually assaulted. To my knowledge, the men were not rebuked by [the Platoon leader].97

A number of female complainants also told the Taskforce that they were only one of numerous women in their section to experience indecent assault or other forms of sexual abuse while undertaking initial training.98 For example, one female complainant described how leading up to a serious incident of indecent assault, the alleged abuser ‘was aggressive towards myself and other female recruits and made many remarks towards us of a sexual nature’, including ‘a lot of unwanted physical contact’.99

The Taskforce also received a number of reports from complainants who described being indecently assaulted under the false pretext of providing medical assistance (seven complainants). In most of these cases, the abuse was carried out by a medic or member of staff who abused their position of authority in order to carry out the abuse.100 For example, one male complainant told the Taskforce that his testicles were fondled by a medical staff member, who told him that it was the best way to take his pulse. The complainant was only 13 years old at the time of the abuse.101 Some female complainants also reported that they were indecently assaulted by members of the Army who were falsely posing as medics at the time of the abuse.102

[iii] Other forms of sexual abuse

They stripped my clothes off, tied leather boot laces around my ankles, picked me up and tied me upside down to the hut rafters, blackened my genitals with boot polish and all vacated the hut. I was left there for several minutes before one by one they came back and demanded I promise not to report this before they let me down.103

A number of complainants also reported having experienced other forms of sexual abuse during initial recruit or employment training in the Army. These types of abuse usually occurred in the context of broader hazing or initiation practices carried out and witnessed by groups of peers from more senior intakes. Complainants who experienced this type of abuse were overwhelmingly male, and frequently reported that they were also subjected to other forms of harassment.
and bullying and physical abuse. Many of the forms of sexual abuse discussed in this section also amount to indecent assault, but have been discussed separately due to the specific characteristics of these practices.

The Taskforce received a high number of complaints involving sexual abuse in the context of hazing or initiation practices involving apprentices at the Army Apprentice School during the 1960s and 1970s. Many of these complainants reported having been subjected to acts of sexual abuse as punishments after informal ‘kangaroo courts’, an informal practice whereby a number of (usually more senior) apprentices arranged themselves in an informal forum resembling a court and delivered punishments to other apprentices in the form of bullying, violent or abusive behaviours. Often, these practices also involved elements of physical abuse, and were carried out simply for the amusement of senior apprentices and the humiliation of the junior apprentices involved. Common practices reported to the Taskforce included:

- ‘Elephant walk’ (witnessed by three complainants, late 1960s to early 1970s), where a length of string with a sliding loop would be placed on an apprentice’s penis and they were then led around the barracks by the string. In some cases, the senior apprentice would then break into a run causing elongation of the penis. Another complainant reported witnessing two apprentices having their penises tied together, causing excruciating pain when they moved;
- ‘Nuggetting’ (three complainants, late 1950s to early 1980s), where an apprentice was held down while a substance such as toothpaste or boot polish was smeared on their genitals. For example, one complainant reported having been stripped naked by a number of apprentices who tied his boot laces around his ankles and tied him upside down to the hut rafters before blackening his genitals with boot polish.

Similar practices were also described by complainants as having occurred at other training establishments, although not to the same extent as at the Army Apprentice School. For example, three complainants reported being subjected to nuggetting (also known as ‘blackballing’) while at ARTC Kapooka, whereby their genitals or anus were smeared with boot polish, ink, or Dencorub. Another complainant reported that he had Vegemite and shaving cream forcibly smeared over his body while undertaking training at RMC.

(b) Sexual harassment in Army recruit and employment training establishments

RMC was in no way culturally prepared for training women in a gender integrated environment. ... To say women were not welcome at RMC was an understatement. Most of the staff professed this openly and by the second week of training most of the male cadets felt the same. There was a consensus that women were not smart enough, strong enough or had the intestinal fortitude to tough out the course. The odds were stacked up against us right from the start. I remember the feeling of not being accepted was overwhelming and frightening.

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 135 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual harassment within the Army (15 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Army). Of the 246 complainants who experienced abuse during initial recruit or employment training in the Army at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 37 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual harassment (15 per cent of complaints reviewed). This included 21 female complainants and 16 male complainants. Sexual harassment was the only type of abuse reported to the Taskforce by more female complainants than male complainants.

Despite the relatively low incidence of sexual harassment complaints to the Taskforce, this type of abuse is likely to have been much more prevalent within the Army than is indicated by the statistics for a number of reasons. This is largely because many complaints of sexual abuse may have included behaviour that could also have been categorised as sexual harassment.

The Taskforce received complaints of sexual harassment that took place between the late 1950s and late 2000s. Male complainants were much more likely to experience sexual harassment during earlier decades, and all but one of the complainants who experienced sexual harassment prior to the late 1970s were male. By contrast, women were overrepresented in complaints of sexual harassment that occurred in recent decades. Of the 13 complainants who experienced sexual harassment after 1990, 11 complainants were women.
Most complainants reported having experienced sexual harassment in addition to other types of abuse, in particular sexual abuse and harassment and bullying. A number of complainants also experienced sexual harassment on an ongoing basis, in some cases over a period of years and carried out across multiple training locations by the same alleged abusers.

Many complainants reported that the sexual harassment they experienced occurred in the context of a broader culture of ‘institutionalised’ sexism at Army recruit and employment training establishments. Many complainants reported that sexual harassment was unofficially condoned or in some cases actively encouraged by members of staff, and as a result became a practice perpetuated amongst fellow recruits and trainees. For example, multiple complainants from ARTC Kapooka discussed how recruits were continually exposed to highly sexualised pictures and degrading comments about women. One complainant reported that training staff had a photo board where they encouraged male recruits to put up photos of naked women or sexual acts, and offered a prize of beer for the most explicit photo.

A number of female complainants reported having been targeted for hostility specifically on the basis of their gender. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that her Army platoon was a ‘men’s domain’ with a ‘real culture of being able to treat women with disdain’, and she experienced ongoing verbal abuse and harassment by men in her platoon.

A number of female complainants reported that the sexual harassment involved multiple alleged abusers of various ranks, and that they were only one of many recruits or trainees to be targeted for sexual harassment at the relevant training establishment. This was described by a complainant who trained at RMC:

Other practices specifically devised to harass, embarrass and humiliate females were overt. For example, it was a requirement for the assigned Duty Officer to make public announcements to the entire cadet population usually after lunch: if the Duty Officer or spokesperson was a female all male cadets would greet her by squealing like a pig. This practice was adopted from a scene in the movie Deliverance in which a male was being gang raped by other males and was told to “squeal like a pig”. Simply put, the male cadets were calling on the female Duty Officer to “bend over and be fucked up the arse”. This practice was observed regularly by male staff who did nothing to stop it, a clear message to male cadets that it was open to them to denigrate and humiliate female cadets through this vile practice. I was subjected to these squealing taunts on many occasions and found it to be humiliating and extremely offensive.

Many female complainants experienced sexual harassment in the form of inappropriate comments or invasive questions of a sexual nature. For example, one complainant described how a male Corporal would show her pictures of women dressed in lingerie and ask her ‘do you have lingerie like that one?’. The same Corporal would also perform unnecessary locker checks during which he would request to look in her underwear drawer, and would make comments about watching her getting changed in her room or perform oral sex on him. Another complainant told the Taskforce of ongoing sexual harassment by a member of higher rank which started ‘almost immediately on arrival’ at a training establishment in the late 1970s:

The [Staff Sergeant] would single me out to “work” in his office alone with the door closed. He didn’t seem to be doing any work but he would stare at me and ask lots of questions about my personal life. He constantly asked me to go on dates with him and I always declined as he seemed very old to me at that time and I believe he was a married man; I had no interest in him whatsoever. On numerous occasions he would also stand behind me while I typed and “massage” my shoulders and I was horrified one day to feel his erect penis sticking into my back. I was also constantly asked to pose for photos; of course I refused as did not want to go anywhere near him out of work time. I believe he meant “nude” photos.

A number of other complainants also described unwelcome sexual advances or sexual intimidation. Many complainants experienced inappropriate physical contact, including unwelcome attempts by colleagues to kiss the complainant, massage the complainant, or pressure the complainant to have sex. One complainant described being subjected to ‘sexually predatory practices’ on a regular basis while training at RMC:

Male cadets would routinely knock on my door, and the doors of other female cadets, after a night out or a dining-in night when they were drunk to try their luck for sex. ... I felt like nothing but a sex object. I felt I had no value as a cadet or a woman.
In a number of reports of sexual harassment, members of a higher rank misused their positions of authority to threaten or punish complainants for rejecting their sexual advances.\textsuperscript{128} For example, one female complainant described being ‘blackmailed’ after rejecting the advances of her supervisor:

He was very angry and told me if I don’t go out with him he is going to put in my file “never to be promoted”.\textsuperscript{129}

Many female complainants further reported being called offensive and derogatory names.\textsuperscript{130} For most complainants, these names alluded to the complainants’ perceived sexual behaviour or promiscuity, such as being called a ‘slut’ or ‘whore’.\textsuperscript{131}

Male complainants were more likely to be targeted for sexual harassment on the basis of perceived homosexuality. A number of male complainants reported being called offensive and derogatory names during their initial Army training, such as ‘faggot’,\textsuperscript{132} ‘homo’,\textsuperscript{133} ‘cunt’\textsuperscript{134} or ‘tits’.\textsuperscript{135} One complainant stated that ‘rarely was my actual name used; I was called cunt, faggot, fuckhead or slug’.\textsuperscript{136} For other complainants, the name calling was directed at female family members, such as the complainants’ mother or sister.\textsuperscript{137}

Other forms of sexual harassment experienced by male complainants at Army recruit and employment training establishments included flashing one’s genitals\textsuperscript{138} or being made to watch pornographic material.\textsuperscript{139} One complainant told the Taskforce that he made a formal complaint to a staff member about being constantly exposed to pornographic material, but was told to ‘grow up’.\textsuperscript{140}

\textbf{(c) Physical abuse in Army recruit and employment training establishments}

I was stripped naked and straddled around a fire hydrant outlet. One person on each arm and leg. The hydrant was turned on and I was blasted with cold water at high pressure. As I was stunned from the force of the water, the garbage bin was then upturned on me and I was covered from head to toe in a disgusting putrefied liquid. The metal bin was dumped on my head. The group that conducted this activity left the scene laughing and mocking me. This was a terrible incident which hurt most of all because it was conducted by my peers.\textsuperscript{141}

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 428 cases as raising plausible allegations of physical abuse within the Army (49 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Army).

A significant number of complainants reported having experienced physical abuse during initial recruit or employment training in the Army. Of the 246 complainants who experienced abuse during initial recruit or employment training in the Army at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 170 complainants reported having been subjected to physical abuse (69 per cent of complaints reviewed). Complainants who experienced physical abuse in Army recruit and employment training establishments were overwhelmingly male (162 complainants). The Taskforce also received a few complaints of physical abuse from female complainants (eight complainants), most of which occurred at ARTC Kapooka (five complainants).

The physical abuse experienced by complainants during initial Army training occurred over a period from the 1950s to 2011, suggesting that a culture of physical abuse against new starts has an entrenched history at Army recruit and employment training establishments. In the complaints assessed by the Taskforce, a high proportion of physical abuse at Army recruit and employment training establishments occurred in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The highest number of complaints involved physical abuse at ARTC Kapooka (79 complainants) and the Army Apprentice School (61 complainants), though incidents of physical abuse were also experienced by complainants at Puckapunyal Military Area and RMC. A number of complainants experienced abuse at multiple locations.

In reports of physical abuse that occurred during initial Army training, almost all of the alleged abusers were male. However, both the ranks of alleged abusers and the context in which physical abuse took place differed between training establishments. For example, at the Army Apprentice School and RMC, physical abuse typically occurred in the context of ongoing campaigns of hazing or initiation carried out by groups of senior peers. In this context, physical abuse was often administered for the amusement of senior peers and to humiliate, intimidate and instil fear amongst newer intakes.
By contrast, the physical abuse that occurred at ARTC Kapooka and Puckapunyal Military Area was more commonly carried out by members of staff, and many complainants reported having experienced physical abuse carried out by multiple staff members.

Across all locations, complainants reported that they were subjected to physical abuse by staff and senior peers in actual or perceived positions of authority as punishment for real or perceived infractions, such as disobeying an order or performing poorly during training.

The nature of the physical abuse experienced during Army recruit and employment training is discussed below. This includes physical assault, threats of violence, physical constraint, and a number of more specific forms of abuse reported by male complainants; physical abuse related to illness or injury; and particular practices of physical abuse carried out by members of staff.

(i) Physical assault

Upon arrival at [the Army Apprentice School] I was allocated a hut with other first year apprentices. Another apprentice entered our hut and not knowing who he was I asked him ‘What are you doing?’ He called me a ‘sprog’ and told me to shut my mouth. He took his belt off and attacked me with his belt buckle which has been sharpened to use as a weapon. He struck me on the back of my hand and the sharpened hook of the buckle cut into my hand. ... [I]t was bleeding and very painful.

The Taskforce received a significant number of complaints regarding acts of physical assault during initial Army training. Complainants told the Taskforce of having been slapped, punched, kicked, strangled, and made to ‘run the gauntlet’. One complainant who attended the Army Apprentice School in the late 1960s recounted that he was subjected to a number of physical assaults including running the gauntlet on his first day:

Within the first hour of arriving at my allocated bed space, I was confronted by three senior class members ... wielding baseball bats and pick-handies. They punched, slapped, screamed and yelled, and made it clear that it was they, the seniors, who were in charge ...

Initiation was next. When all of our class had arrived, we were rounded up and herded to the veranda of the adjacent hut. One by one we were dragged into this hut for our initiation. ... [W]e had to run from end to end of the hut while the senior class belted us with boots and other hard objects in pillowcases. I came to sometime later on my bed, having been knocked out. All the other juniors had bumps, bruising, welts and cuts. By day three, we were all familiar with the sound of fist on flesh and went to sleep many times to the sound of whimpering class mates.

Many complainants described serious acts of physical assault carried out by their peers and those undertaking training from more senior intakes. A number of complainants told the Taskforce that physical assault was a day-to-day occurrence at the Army Apprentice School as part of a broader culture of systemic physical abuse of junior apprentices. Much of this abuse reportedly stemmed from the supervisory role given to senior apprentices in their third year of training. For example, a complainant who attended the Army Apprentice School in the late 1960s recalled that senior apprentices would physically assault junior apprentices for any perceived breach of regulation:

[The] cadre staff had turned some juniors away from the mess to attend to their personal cleanliness like dirt under the nails [or] hair [that] needed brushing. [The Apprentice Sergeant and Hut Corporals] took this as an insult that they were not managing their charges correctly. So when each soldier was returned to barracks to clean their hands or brush their hair before partaking in a meal [the Apprentice Sergeant] would punch and or strike the junior apprentice as punishment, these were generally body blows. This behaviour was [a] regular occurrence, to be bashed for minor breaches of regulations.

Complainants reported that senior apprentices and staff cadets would use acts of physical assault as a way of teaching newer intakes a lesson for not complying with their requests. Other complainants reported that incidents of physical assault would occur with little warning and for trivial reasons. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

An intermediate apprentice punched me in the face breaking my nose. He said he didn’t like the jam I gave his table while I was on mess duty.
A number of complainants reported being subjected to group bashings by others members of their training cohort as well as groups of senior peers (35 complainants). Some complainants also reported that group bashings were perpetrated to punish junior recruits for perceived infractions or deter junior recruits from reporting instances of abuse or misconduct that they personally experienced or witnessed. Other complainants reported that they were targeted for group bashings on account of perceived differences to the rest of their cohort, including age, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Some complainants reported that they were physically assaulted by groups of their peers as a result of poor performance during training exercises or assessments. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

The training was extremely stressful, for everyone, but as I was failing, and young, I had different sorts of stress. I was [the] target to be punched and hit because I was young, and failing my assessments. … [W]e had a battle efficiency test weekly. I failed often. Because I could not keep up, I was dragged, kicked, beaten. At one stage I tried to escape because I saw a gate, and tried to climb the gate, I was dragged back by several recruits and they were told to kick the shit out of me.

In addition, complainants also told the Taskforce of a number of specific ‘games’ and forms of punishment that occurred at the Army Apprentice School, which involved serious acts of physical assault carried out by senior apprentices. These included:

- ‘Spinner’ – standing on a chair while being punched;
- ‘Evacuate’ – diving out of a window on command;
- ‘Human 10 pins’ – standing at the end of an accommodation hut while senior apprentices ran down the aisle with the intent to knock the junior apprentices over;
- ‘Hot and cold iron’ – having a hot iron held near the chest and then a cold iron pushed onto the chest to create a burning sensation. In a variation of this practice, a towel saturated with hot water was placed on an apprentice’s face while a hot steam iron was held next to the apprentice’s head. Heat, pressure and steam created a sensation of drowning. Two complainants reported being subjected to hot or cold iron on the buttocks;
- ‘Crocodiles and alligators’ –junior apprentices being made to hang onto the rafters in the huts using their hands so that they were suspended. A senior apprentice would ask ‘crocodiles or alligators?’ and the junior would be punched regardless of their answer, with the intention of seeing how much pain the apprentice could endure before letting go of the rafters and falling to the floor;
- ‘Chooking’ – butting-out a cigarette on an apprentice’s wet backside;
- ‘Crucifixion’ – having broomsticks pushed through the arms and legs of uniforms and duct-taped in place;
- ‘Regimental scrub’ – being tied naked to a frame or otherwise forced into the shower block to be scrubbed. One complainant told the Taskforce that he had been given a shot of high pressure from a fire hose before detergents and cleansers were thrown over him and he was scrubbed by senior apprentices using hard-bristled brooms and scrubbing brushes, causing open wounds.

The Taskforce also received reports from several complainants of a particular form of physical abuse involving physical assault that occurred at RMC in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Complainants told the Taskforce that a staff cadet would be woken during the night by senior staff cadets who would put a pillow case over their head, tie their hands and beat them. The staff cadet would then be driven and dumped in an isolated area of Canberra, sometimes with their clothes removed, requiring them to find their way back to RMC with no transport or money.

(ii) Threats of violence

I had been constantly told, “What goes on at Kapooka stays at Kapooka” and that if I ever told anyone anything about the abuse I had copped, I would be hunted down and flogged to death.

The Taskforce received a large number of complaints involving threats of violence while complainants were undertaking initial Army training (81 complainants). Over half of these complaints involved abuse at the Army Apprentice School between the mid-1960s and the late 1980s (42 complainants).
Complainants told the Taskforce of having experienced death threats and threats of physical assault. Such threats were often made by senior apprentices, staff cadets and recruits to humiliate newer intakes and bully them into performing menial and demeaning tasks and chores. Complainants were also reportedly threatened with violence by some staff at Army training establishments, with one complainant who attended ARTC Kapooka in the late 1970s recalling that:

Another recruit and I were being instructed in drill ... [and] both he and I had trouble mastering this. The Corporal became very agitated. ... [W]e were marched back to the barracks [and] the Corporal informed us that he wanted to see myself and the other recruit in the baggage room of our accommodation. Once we were in the baggage room the Corporal lock[ed] the door and threatened both of us with violence there and then if we did not lift our game and perform as required. We assured the Corporal that we would do our best and do as requested; he said if we didn’t there would be further sessions in the baggage room.

Complainants also reported being threatened with weapons including rifles, knives and swords. For example, during the 1970s and 1980s, three complainants were reportedly threatened with a knife by one of their peers, and one complainant was threatened with a knife by a member of staff. Other complainants reported being threatened by staff and senior peers with loaded and unloaded rifles, including in circumstances where an alleged abuser pulled the trigger on the weapon, which did not discharge.

In some cases, complainants who experienced physical abuse during initial Army training were threatened with additional violence as a means of deterring them from reporting the abuse. This included two female complainants who were sexually assaulted while undertaking initial training and then threatened with physical violence by the alleged abuser after the sexual assault.

### Physical constraint

A large number of complainants told the Taskforce of experiencing physical abuse in the form of being physically constrained or forcibly restrained. This was the second most widely reported type of physical abuse experienced by complainants in Army recruit and employment training establishments.

Many complainants reported having been held down by groups of their peers and subjected to physical assaults that included being forcibly shaved, kicked or punched. For example, a female complainant who served in the late 1970s reported that she was forcibly restrained by a number of members of her platoon and thrown into a river:

One Sunday afternoon the platoon had time off and some of the members went to the [river] for a picnic. I was in full kit with my Army boots and uniform and because the men were bored they decided to threaten to throw me in the river. I thought that they were joking. A few of them chased me and then they held me by the arms and legs and started “pretending” to throw me in. They then started swinging me backwards and forwards and despite my screaming they actually threw me into the river. The [river] at that time was very full and fast flowing and deep and I started being swept along. ... I was really terrified as I had no control and feared for my life. When I got back to the men they were all laughing and thought it was a great joke.

Other complainants reported having been suspended or ‘hung’ from rafters or another fixture at a height and subjected to physical assault. Complainants were also physically constrained in objects such as clothes lockers, mattress protectors, or laundry bags and physically abused while trapped inside, for example, the clothes locker would be repeatedly tipped over. One complainant who was forcibly constrained by senior apprentices while attending the Army Apprentice School in the early 1980s recalled that:

I was pulled from my bed in my pyjamas and forced into an industrial waste bin. It was ¾ full of water. I was in the bin with another junior and the lids were shut down. Luckily there was a gap so we could breathe. We were in there for at least an hour. We were both scared for our lives and we were both traumatised as a result.
(iv) ‘Bed tipping’

A number of complainants reported that they were subjected to bed tipping carried out by a group of senior peers at night, often when complainants were asleep [20 complainants]. Most incidents of bed tipping occurred while complainants were undertaking training at the Army Apprentice School [18 complainants], often having taken place during an ‘arseholing’ where a complainant’s room was systematically vandalised. For example, one complainant who attended the Army Apprentice School in the early 1970s recounted multiple instances of bed tipping on ‘Crab Night’, which occurred 100 days before the senior intake graduated and involved seniors going ‘berserk’ and ‘letting off steam’ by fighting, throwing things at each other and harassing and abusing the junior apprentices. The complainant reported that:

At around about 8pm I was sitting on my bed, when I heard noises coming from the southern door. The other apprentices in my hut rushed to the door to block it. Despite trying to block the door, about six to eight blokes came rushing into the hut. Once they were in, they instructed the other apprentices to return to their bed-spaces. I was already in my bed-space. They then started to question everyone in the hut about what trade they were in. They ransacked our lockers and turned our beds upside down. …

After they left, the apprentices in my hut put all of our belongings away and tidied up the overturned beds. Less than an hour later, another group did the exact same thing. … This happened four or five times before midnight.

(v) ‘Blanket bashing’

For at least six weeks, I was visited in my room up to three times a week to get “sorted out.” The bashings slowed as recruit training went on, but they continued to occur on a less regular basis.

The Taskforce also received a number of complaints involving blanket bashing that occurred at the Army Apprentice School and ARTC Kapooka between the late 1960s and early 1990s [22 complainants]. Complainants described how blanket bashings were carried out by a group of senior recruits or apprentices as punishment for a perceived infraction or to reinforce informal hierarchies within training establishments. One complainant told the Taskforce that at the Army Apprentice School, blanket bashings were sometimes handed down as a ‘sentence’ during a kangaroo court convened by senior apprentices. Another complainant described his experience at ARTC Kapooka in the early 1980s to the Taskforce as follows:

That night, about a week into basic training, approximately six recruits entered my room while I slept. I was held down as my bed was pulled into the middle of the room and a blanket was thrown over the top of me to secure me to the bed and I was bashed with cakes of soap placed in socks acting as coshes. The coshes were swung for several minutes aimed mostly at my torso – they were very careful not to hit me in the face.

The next morning, I approached my section leader, told him what had happened and showed him the severe bruising on my torso and legs. He told me that was just the way it was and to “play the game” and warned me not to mention it or make a complaint to anyone else or things would just get worse.

(vi) ‘Grovelling’ or forced participation in fighting

Other recruits and I were taken into a room one at a time. All the beds in the room had been moved back so that the room was like an arena. We were then told that we had to fight each other, and that we had to make it look good. The recruits were told that if we did not fight each other, we would be severely physically beaten by the ring leaders and other recruits, and there were about 20 of them. I had to fight the other vulnerable recruits. I felt I had no choice, as I was fearful of being physically beaten myself.

Many complainants reported that they were subjected to forced participation in fighting or grovelling against members of their own intake for the amusement or financial gain of senior apprentices at the Army Apprentice School [16 complainants], as well as a few complainants who experienced this form of abuse at ARTC Kapooka [four complainants]. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that ‘seniors took great delight in staging violent events or blood sports for their entertainment’. The Taskforce received reports of forced fighting at the Army Apprentice School from the late 1960s to early 1990s, indicating that this form of physical abuse occurred within the Army Apprentice Scheme for most of the time it was in operation.
Complainants described being made to participate in a variety of forms of forced fighting. One complainant reported that junior apprentices would be forced to fight each other in ‘bare knuckle’ boxing matches. Other complainants reported forced fighting in the form of the ‘guts hut grovel’, where junior apprentices were systematically beaten up by seniors in tag team wrestling matches. Some complainants reported that they were forced to fight more than one senior apprentice at a time. One complainant told the Taskforce that junior apprentices were made to fight each other naked in the shower block using garbage tin lids and broom handles in a game known as ‘gladiators’. He described the experience as follows:

Several junior intake apprentices, including myself were forced to strip and enter the shower block (approx 5 x 3 metres) with several shower hoses turned on, alternating [between] hot and cold. We were given garbage tin lids and broom handles and were forced to combat with each other with the fear of violence threatened by senior and intermediate intake apprentices if we did not do as told.

Complainants reported that they were often knocked out during incidents of forced fighting and suffered from facial bruising and swelling.

(vii) Physical abuse related to illness or injury

The Taskforce received a number of complaints involving the denial of medical assistance or forced participation in training exercises against medical advice (15 complainants). The majority of these complaints related to ARTC Kapooka during the 1980s (eight complainants). A number of complainants reported that they were labelled a ‘malingerer’, accused of making up an illness, or forced to complete an activity despite being injured.

For example, one complainant who attended ARTC Kapooka in the early 1970s told the Taskforce that he attended parade drill one morning without having shaved because he was feeling ill and had run out of time. His Platoon Sergeant then threatened him to dry shave in front of the entire platoon or accept a military charge. After accepting the military charge, the complainant asked to be dismissed due to his illness. His Platoon Sergeant called him a ‘fool’ and ordered him to complete the morning drills. The complainant subsequently spent several days in hospital suffering from a serious illness.

Another complainant who attended ARTC Kapooka in the early 1990s told the Taskforce that he was labelled a ‘running joke’ by his training Corporal and refused medical treatment.

(viii) Physical abuse by members of staff

A large number of complainants told the Taskforce that they were subjected to physical abuse by members of staff of recruit and employment training establishments (81 complainants). Many of the complaints of physical abuse carried out by members of staff occurred at ARTC Kapooka between the early 1960s and 2011 (63 complainants), with a high incidence of complaints of abuse during the 1970s and 1980s.

A large number of complainants reported that physical abuse by staff at ARTC Kapooka occurred in combination with harassment and bullying. Complainants reported that they were targeted for abuse by staff on the basis of physical characteristics, or because a member of staff had a ‘personal dislike’ towards them. Complainants told the Taskforce that members of staff at ARTC Kapooka were responsible for serious acts of physical abuse, including pushing, slapping, punching, kicking or strangulation. Some members of staff reportedly encouraged other recruits to also physically abuse the complainant, such as by spitting on them.

Complainants also told the Taskforce that members of staff used acts of physical abuse to ‘harden’ recruits for life as a soldier. This included reports that members of staff would secretly order or tacitly condone acts of physical abuse against recruits by their course mates as a result of poor performance or for minor infractions during training.

For example, one complainant reported that at ARTC Kapooka in the early 1990s, a Corporal encouraged other recruits to ‘out or burn each other if one soldier was not doing so well’. Other complainants told the Taskforce that they were threatened with physical assault by members of staff to deter them from reporting abuse.
[d] Harassment and bullying in Army recruit and employment training establishments

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 580 cases as raising plausible allegations of harassment and bullying within the Army (66 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Army).

Of the 246 complainants who experienced abuse during initial recruit or employment training in the Army at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 186 complainants reported having been subjected to harassment and bullying (76 per cent of complaints reviewed). The majority of complaints involved harassment and bullying at ARTC Kapooka (85 complainants), including a large number of complaints of harassment and bullying that occurred at ARTC Kapooka during the 1980s (39 complainants). The Taskforce also received complaints of harassment and bullying at the Army Apprentice School (54 complainants), Puckapunyal Military Area (29 complainants), and RMC (27 complainants). Complaints of harassment and bullying in Army training establishments spanned from the early 1950s to 2011, with most complaints of abuse having occurred during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Most of the complainants who reported experiencing harassment and bullying during initial Army training were male (169 complainants), though the Taskforce also received complaints from a number of female complainants who experienced harassment and bullying (17 complainants). Most alleged abusers were male, and held a higher rank to the complainant or were employed in positions of authority. However, a number of complainants experienced harassment and bullying carried out by their course mates and peers (24 complainants), mostly at ARTC Kapooka.

A large number of complainants experienced ongoing and sustained campaigns of harassment and bullying. This included ongoing harassment and bullying largely in the context of hazing or initiation practices by senior staff cadets and apprentices against junior intakes at the Army Apprentice School and RMC. At ARTC Kapooka, a high proportion of complainants reported ongoing campaigns of abuse carried out by staff, largely on the basis of poor performance during training, which staff considered could be remedied through the 'hardening' effects of abuse. Complaints who experienced harassment and bullying at Puckapunyal Military Area during their initial training also reported ongoing abuse carried out by members of a higher rank for a number of reasons including race, physical appearance, illness or injury, or simply for an alleged abuser’s own amusement. Female complainants reported having been targeted for harassment and bullying on the basis of their gender, and often experienced harassment and bullying alongside other forms of abuse including sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

The nature of the harassment and bullying experienced during Army recruit and employment training is discussed below. This includes verbal abuse, unreasonable tasks and demands, humiliating and degrading acts, interference with personal property, and harassment and bullying carried out by members of staff.

(i) Verbal abuse

Verbal abuse was the most commonly reported form of harassment and bullying experienced by complainants at Army recruit and employment training establishments. Many complainants told the Taskforce that verbal abuse was a day-to-day occurrence during initial Army training. One complainant who undertook training ARTC Kapooka in the late 1980s stated that: ‘It seemed that no-one in the platoon ever spoke, everyone screamed, yelled and shouted.' Another complainant told the Taskforce that verbal abuse commenced immediately upon his arrival at ARTC Kapooka in the early 1970s:

On arrival at Kapooka I was singled out by [a Corporal] ... and he immediately verbally attacked me, screaming profanities and threats. ... I was then handed over to our trainers with the introduction as a smart arse and other derogatory names. From this point on I was marked. ... He moved into my personal space shouting obscenities inches from my face. It was frightening and very intimidating. ... This set the scene for more bastardisation to come during training.
Complainants told the Taskforce of having been routinely belittled, mocked, sworn at, or verbally abused in the form of derogatory remarks. Several complainants reported that they were repeatedly accused of being a "liar" while undertaking initial training, described by one complainant as a form of verbal abuse intended to create an 'aura of incompetency' by questioning his integrity. Complainants reported that members of staff often encouraged other recruits to copy their verbally abusive behaviour, further isolating complainants who experienced this type of abuse.

For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

After [the Corporal] had commenced his bullying of me, the other recruits began to join in with him, making fun at my expense. I was constantly called a cunt, moron and lazy prick.

Some complainants reported having been singled out and verbally abused on the basis of their physical appearance, perceived religious or political beliefs, or sexuality. A number of complainants reported that they were singled out for verbal abuse on the basis of their race or ethnicity. These complainants described practices such as name calling, or being harassed and teased for having an accent or a name which was difficult to pronounce. Many complainants who experienced racial abuse reported that it frequently involved both training staff and fellow recruits. Verbal abuse targeting race often occurred in conjunction with other forms of abuse, including being arbitrarily singled out for discipline during inspections, falsely accused of committing offences, or while being physically assaulted.

The Taskforce also received reports from several complainants who were subjected to verbal abuse relating to illness or injury. Most of these complainants were undertaking initial training at ARTC Kapooka at the time of the abuse. Complainants reported being subjected to teasing and name calling. Almost all of the abuse in these complaints was carried out by a member of a higher rank, usually a staff member. Complainants described a culture in which illness or injury was not tolerated and those with medical restrictions were labelled a malingerer or treated as if they were lying. This sometimes resulted in forced participation in training activities against medical advice or a denial of medical treatment (discussed at Section 17.4(c)).

One complainant told the Taskforce that he was subjected to verbal abuse when he was due to post to the remedial platoon in an effort to recover from bronchitis and pneumonia. The complainant recounted that:

A day or two before I was due to leave for the remedial platoon, I was woken early in the morning at approximately 2am. I was marched up to the platoon office by the Bombardier, non-commissioned officer of my section, and stood in front of the Sergeant and two other Corporals. The Sergeant said, "in this platoon before you go to the slugs, we give recruits a chance to take themselves out", whereupon I was handed what I thought was a loaded pistol and told to put it to my temple. I was shouted at to stand to attention and told to "pull the fucking trigger", because all I was, was "a slug". I was told I was "a disgrace to my fucking family and my fucking country" and I was told to shoot myself, to kill myself.

(ii) Unreasonable tasks and demands

I was subjected to implied and direct coercion to complete other cadets’ work such as washing, cleaning, ironing and polishing of senior cadets’ personal uniforms and civilian clothing, completion of senior cadets’ academic assignments or workbooks ... washing senior cadets’ cars on weekends as punishment for misdemeanours, extra duties because of refusal to comply with illegal orders from senior cadets, “show parades” throughout the night whereby you are ordered to appear in different forms of dress with very limited time to change.

A significant number of complainants experienced harassment and bullying in the form of unreasonable tasks and demands from senior peers at Army recruit and employment training establishments. Many complainants who were junior staff cadets at RMC and apprentices at the Army Apprentice School during the early 1980s reported being made to perform menial tasks and chores for senior cadets and apprentices under threat of physical violence if they did not comply. One complainant described it as an entrenched culture where they were made to do the ‘dirty work’ of senior apprentices. This included polishing senior apprentices’ boots and brass, ironing their clothes, bringing them food from the mess, providing them with loans and cigarettes, as well as running other meaningless or trivial errands. For example, one complainant who attended RMC in the early 1980s told the Taskforce that his section leader demanded I wake him each morning with a cup of hot coffee at hand and a lit cigarette which
COMPLAINTS OF ABUSE IN THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY

I would have to place in his mouth as he awoke’. Other complainants reported that they were made to perform extra duties for weeks on end, perform excessive push-ups, redo tasks already completed, or complete extra drills for unsubstantiated reasons.

At least two complainants reported that they were singled out to perform unreasonable tasks on the basis of their ethnicity, including being made to repeat phrases or act in a certain way for the amusement of the alleged abuser.

(iii) Humiliating and degrading acts

In addition to performing unreasonable tasks and demands at the behest of peers from senior intakes, some complainants told the Taskforce of being forced to perform a range of humiliating and degrading acts. These included being ordered to scrape polish off the linoleum with a razor blade, unblock the toilets by hand, warm the toilet seats for senior apprentices, and lick up spit from the ground. Other complainants reported being made to stand at attention while dressed only in towels, complete obstacle courses in the bathroom while naked, or take ‘birdie baths’, which involved bathing using only the hand basin.

A complainant who attended RMC as a junior staff cadet in the early 1980s told the Taskforce of being ordered to perform a humiliating task when he did not complete a range of other unreasonable tasks to a senior cadet’s satisfaction:

When we got back to the barracks I was made to run around on a series of futile errands as usual. One of which I did not perform satisfactorily. One of the senior cadets then ordered me to run around and find every senior and to announce, “My name is Staff Cadet [complainant’s name] and I am a f..k wit”. I was getting pretty tired of this and my anger/contempt for these guys was beginning to show on my face – as was pointed out to me. One of them then ordered me to go back and tell every senior, “My name is Staff Cadet Pissed Off and I am a f..k wit”.

(iv) Interference with personal property

Many complainants reported having their room vandalised or their personal property interfered with at all Army recruit and employment training establishments, particularly during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that trainees at Puckapunyal Military Area would ‘rub and wipe their penises and anus on my pillow and sheets’. Most complainants described this kind of behaviour as carried out in the context of systemic hazing or initiation practices within informal hierarchies at a number of training establishments.

Complainants who attended RMC told the Taskforce of senior staff cadets destroying or ‘ransacking’ property in a junior staff cadet’s room, often by throwing property out the window, throwing water over property, or throwing property on the floor. A complainant who attended RMC in the early 1980s described his experience as follows:

Systematic forced entry (breaking of locked accommodation). … Systematic destruction of my place of residency, including tearing up of bed, desk, physical dismantling of entire room, physically ransacking of room, destroying property including radio and other goods including civilian and military clothing, ruining of academic books and notes.

A number of complainants who experienced harassment and bullying at the Army Apprentice School told the Taskforce of being subjected to arseholing, where beds and lockers would be deliberately pushed and tipped over by senior apprentices. Other complainants reported that senior apprentices would throw their belongings around their room or empty foot powder over their belongings.

The Taskforce also received a number of complaints involving interference with personal property by members of staff at ARTC Kapooka. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that members of staff would abuse their position of authority by interfering with his property during room inspections:

We were required to be immaculate and to keep all our gear in immaculate condition. This included our clothes which had to be starched and ironed. I was held up as a bit of an example on how to keep my gear in an immaculate condition and would have to display gear when requested. The Corporals and Sergeants took to coming in to my room and ripping apart my gear. They would pull all my ironed and folded clothes and crumple them so that I would be forced to go through the whole process of washing, ironing and starching them again. This happened frequently at Kapooka.
Harassment and bullying by members of staff

The Taskforce received reports from a large number of complainants who experienced abuse carried out by members of staff and training instructors during initial Army training (96 complainants).

A number of complainants told the Taskforce of having been subjected to excessively harsh punishment and disciplinary practices for any real or perceived breach of regulations, and a high proportion of these complaints involved members of staff at ARTC Kapooka during the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s. Complainants told the Taskforce that they were made to hold rifles straight out in front of them while travelling between classes, stand on the parade ground for hours at a time, clean training or living areas with a toothbrush, or perform ‘leaps’ (where a recruit was required to change from one uniform to another in an unreasonably short amount of time). Other complainants reported that they were ordered to engage in excessive physical activity, or had their leave cancelled. A number of complainants who trained at ARTC Kapooka reported that their bedding would be thrown out the window as punishment for not completing an activity or drill to the required standard.

Some complainants told the Taskforce of being subjected to harsh punishments for very minor breaches of regulation. For example, one complainant who attended Army training in the late 1980s told the Taskforce that he was harshly punished for ‘minor indiscretions’ such as tying his bootlaces the wrong way:

I would then be punished by being made to perform tasks. These included being made to do push ups while [the Corporal] read adult magazines, or being made to make a bed dozens of times for [the Corporal] to then tear apart.

Other complainants who attended ARTC Kapooka and Puckapunyal Military Area also told the Taskforce of experiencing harassment and bullying in the form of unreasonable tasks and demands by members of staff, which often involved elements of physical abuse. This included being forced to dry shave with a damaged razor. Some complainants reported being ordered to perform unreasonable tasks by members of staff outside of formal training periods and often at night. This included being ordered to perform drills, obstacle courses or other outdoor activities, or being ordered to refrain from using the bathroom. One complainant reported that members of staff at ARTC Kapooka would deliberately set recruits an ‘impossible task’ that would result in penalties if the task was unable to be completed. For example, by ordering that all recruits present to the mess for lunch, showered and with clean equipment, in an unreasonably short amount of time after having engaged in outdoor activity, knowing that they would fail inspection and be denied lunch.

Complainants reported that some members of staff would punish a whole course for one member of the platoon’s mistake, creating resentment between peers. For example, one complaint told the Taskforce that training staff would allocate push-ups after dinner for any mistakes made during the day, and the whole section would be made to complete push-ups while the recruit who had made the mistake counted them out.

The Taskforce received reports that indicate that harsh training and disciplinary practices have a long history in the Army. For example, a complainant who attended Puckapunyal Military Area in the late 1950s reported an incident where a staff member subjected an entire platoon to a particularly harsh disciplinary practice:

On the day of the incident we spent such a full [and hot] day of drilling and returned to our tents to clean our kit and have our evening meal. However we were then repeatedly called out on parade by [the Bombardier] for quite trivial reasons. Eventually the men rebelled and refused to turn out.

The upshot of this was after eventually turning out and after having our meal we were told to turn out in full kit and with our rifles. We were instructed by [the Bombardier] to fill our backpacks and ammunition pouches with rocks, which we did, and were then taken on the punishment march, alternating marching for a mile and doubling for a mile. This continued well into the night and for a very considerable distance. There were no breaks for drinking or rests.
17.5 Complaints of abuse during regular service in the Army

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 879 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse within the Army (40 per cent of all cases), experienced by more than 650 complainants. Many of these cases involved abuse experienced by complainants during regular service in the Army, which occurred after having completed initial recruit and employment training and while employed in position on base or on deployment.

It is important to note that the Taskforce has categorised the abuse experienced by each complainant as forming one or more ‘cases’ of abuse. Many complainants experienced multiple cases of abuse. One case generally relates to abuse experienced at one location (occasionally abuse experienced over a number of locations may be classed as one case of abuse if it is part of an ongoing campaign of abuse). The discussion of abuse throughout this section generally refers to the number of complainants, or individuals, who experienced a particular type or form of abuse during their time in the Army.

The Taskforce conducted a close review of complaints received by 169 complainants regarding abuse that occurred during regular Army service at the following locations, as they had the highest number of complaints from individuals who were in the Army at the time of the abuse: Lavarack Barracks (60 complainants), Holsworthy Barracks (38 complainants), Gallipoli Barracks (37 complainants), and Robertson Barracks (19 complainants), as well as a small number of complainants who were undertaking regular service at Puckapunyal Military Area, Latchford Barracks, RMC or Blamey Barracks at the time of the abuse. A number of complainants experienced abuse at more than one location.

The summary below is based on information provided by the 169 complainants who were undertaking regular Army service at these locations. It is important to note that where figures are given, they only relate to complaints of abuse experienced by people during regular Army service at these locations. These figures do not represent the total number of complaints received by the Taskforce regarding abuse that occurred during regular Army service. Rather, they are used to represent trends and patterns in the abuse that has occurred over time.

Complainants undertaking regular service at these locations most commonly reported experiencing harassment and bullying (128 complainants), followed by physical abuse (84 complainants), sexual abuse (45 complainants), and sexual harassment (30 complainants). The first case of abuse originated in the 1950s and the last was reported to have occurred in 2011, with particularly high rates of abuse relating to the 1990s and 2000s.

The vast majority of complainants who experienced abuse during regular Army service were male. Male complainants frequently reported having experienced harassment and bullying in combination with physical abuse (50 complainants), which predominantly occurred during the 1990s and 2000s. However, there were also significant numbers of female complainants who experienced abuse during regular Army service (47 complainants). For female complainants, abuse reported to the Taskforce was more likely to involve harassment and bullying or sexual harassment, and to have occurred from the 1990s onwards. A proportionately high number of women also experienced at least one incident of sexual abuse, often in a broader context of ongoing sexual harassment.

Many complainants experienced abuse at a young age and while of relatively junior rank, such as Private or Corporal, and often during their early years of regular service at the relevant Army establishment. Nearly all complainants reported that the abuse they experienced was carried out by a member of equivalent or higher rank. In a number of cases, alleged abusers were officers of particularly senior rank in the Army. Many complainants experienced abuse carried out by their direct supervisors to whom they might otherwise have reported the abuse. These complainants told the Taskforce that the alleged abusers used their positions of authority to further the abuse or to ensure that complainants would not report the abuse.

The Taskforce received complaints of abuse that occurred both during and outside of regular work hours. Abuse that occurred within formal work hours was generally characterised by harassment and bullying. However, there were also some serious incidents of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and ongoing sexual harassment that occurred during working hours. For many of these complainants, the abuse took place in full view of more senior ranking officers and, in some cases, was initiated by superiors themselves.
Abuse that was reported as arising outside of formal work hours was more likely to have occurred in circumstances involving the consumption of alcohol or other drugs. This was particularly common in complaints of sexual abuse. In many of these cases, complainants reported that they were inebriated at the time of abuse, or unconscious for all or part of the abuse. There were also a number of cases in which the alleged abuser was intoxicated at the time of abuse.

Many complainants told the Taskforce that they were targeted for abuse because of certain attributes that marked them out as ‘different’ from their peers and co-workers. This included being singled out on the basis of their gender, sexuality, race, or workplace performance. There were also a number of complainants who reported that they were targeted for abuse on the basis of illness or injury.

The sections below provide a summary of the main types of abuse experienced during regular service at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce.

(a) Sexual abuse during regular service in the Army

I awoke to find [the Sergeant] naked on top of me. My trousers had been removed. I was extremely groggy at the time. He was holding me down and I was finding it difficult to push him off due to my groggy state. He was kissing me and stroking my penis. He had an erection. He was telling me to relax and not to struggle. … I did not report it out of shame and embarrassment and the stigma attached to something such as this. As such I simply bottled it up and as a result have suffered terribly.299

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 287 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual abuse within the Army (33 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Army).

Of the 169 complainants who experienced abuse during regular Army service at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 45 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual abuse (27 per cent of complaints reviewed). This included 24 male complainants and 21 female complainants. Many of these complainants were of relatively junior rank at the time of the abuse. In all but one complaint of sexual abuse, the alleged abusers were male.

The Taskforce received complaints of sexual abuse that occurred between the late 1960s and late 2000s. Most incidents of sexual abuse reported to the Taskforce took place in recent decades, with a particularly high number of complainants who experienced abuse during the 1990s (17 complainants). Almost all incidents of sexual abuse that occurred after 2000 were experienced by female complainants (10 out of 11 complainants). Most female complainants reported that the abuse they experienced was carried out by a single alleged abuser who was of a higher rank to the complainant at the time of the abuse (nine complainants).

By contrast, sexual abuse reported by male complainants was more evenly spread throughout the 1970s and 1990s, with only one male complainant who experienced sexual abuse after 2000. Most male complainants experienced sexual abuse that was carried out by multiple alleged abusers (16 complainants), often in the context of hazing or initiation activities.

The nature of the sexual abuse experienced during regular service in the Army is discussed below, including sexual assault, indecent assault, as well as other forms of sexual abuse.

(i) Sexual assault

He still held me down on the bed and he placed his right hand inside my track pants ... and he touched me on the vagina. I said, “Please don’t”. Tears began to form in my eyes, I continued to attempt to reason with him and to push him away, nothing changed. He then placed his finger inside my vagina and it went in as far as it could go, he moved it in and out and was very forceful, it felt like it lasted forever, in fact it was probably about two minutes. About this time I was devastated and did not know what to do to stop him.300

The Taskforce received a number of complaints involving sexual assault during regular Army service (17 complainants). The Taskforce received reports of sexual assault from nine male complainants and eight female complainants. There were significant differences in the experiences of sexual assault reported by male and female complainants.
Female complainants were more likely to have experienced sexual assault carried out by a single alleged abuser, and that occurred within the past decade. This included incidentals of vaginal penetration by an alleged abuser’s penis, or digital penetration.

By contrast, the majority of male complainants who experienced sexual assault reported that it was carried out by multiple alleged abusers. Sexual assault reported by male complainants was more likely to occur during the 1970s or 1990s, with the most recent incident in the late 1990s. In many cases involving male complainants, the sexual assault involved anal penetration by an alleged abuser’s penis, digital penetration, or forced oral sex. For example, a small number of complainants described waking up to find an alleged abuser performing oral sex on them. A complainant described how on multiple occasions ‘when the opportunity arose’, an alleged abuser would insert a finger into his anus and then physically restrain the complainant in order to force him to smell his fingers.

A number of male complainants reported sexual assault that involved actual or threatened penetration with a foreign object, such as a broom handle or beer bottle. One complainant stated that on multiple occasions during his service, he was given electric shocks with a clacker phone, including having it ‘jammed up [his] bum crack’. Other complainants reported that on at least one occasion, a group of alleged abusers threatened to insert a metal tracking pin into their anus.

For many complainants, both male and female, the sexual assault reported to the Taskforce involved a physical element of being forcibly held down or otherwise constrained while the abuse took place. In some cases, this escalated to a serious physical assault. For example, one complainant described how he was dragged from his bed and held from behind by several peers, while others stripped him naked under a cold shower. He was then punched and kicked repeatedly, and scrubbed with a broom until he was bleeding, before the broom handle was eventually inserted into his anus.

Many female complainants spoke about male alleged abusers using their physical strength to overpower them during an incident of sexual assault. One complainant described a particularly violent incident of sexual assault carried out by three members of her company in the late 1970s, all of whom she considered to be her friends:

I trusted them and when they suggested going for a drive and having a drink I thought nothing of it. … When we arrived [at the beach] we got out of the car and were all sitting on the beach talking. We had not been there for very long before I was suddenly grabbed and my back was shoved onto the sand. I was wearing jeans and someone had taken them off. [One of my colleagues] held me down. [A second colleague] penetrated me with his penis and [a third colleague] had his penis in my mouth. This happened all at the same time. I tried to clench my mouth shut however one of the other men had his hand on my jaw and really hurting me which caused my mouth to open. The penis was in my mouth until he ejaculated in my mouth. … It was as though it was a big joke to them. They acted as though it was their right to do it.

There were a number of reports of sexual assault which involved the consumption of alcohol or other drugs. Many of these complainants told the Taskforce that they were in and out of consciousness during an incident of sexual assault. For example, one complainant described how she returned to a Defence establishment after drinking at a party and woke to find a colleague had removed her clothes and was digitally penetrating her. The alleged abuser then held his hand over her mouth to stop her from yelling out for help until she eventually passed out again. Another complainant told the Taskforce that he was sexually assaulted in the late 1970s, after being forced to drink a large quantity of alcohol.
I woke in the early morning on the floor, my pants down around my ankles and my bayonet scabbard on the floor. I had excruciating pain in my rectum and some significant bleeding.313

Some complainants reported that they were deliberately drugged by the alleged abuser, and sexually assaulted while incapacitated.314 One complainant told the Taskforce that he suspected he was drugged and sexually assaulted by a superior on numerous occasions in the early 1990s:

I did not know it at the time but I now strongly believe that while I was [working] ... he had used some sort of drug on me. ... I would get very tired and fall asleep and not wake till morning with a hangover feeling and no memory from that night. ... I was very concerned at the time that something was being done to me that I had no memory of, and with the way he was talking when out field I was getting more and more worried but had no one to report this stuff to and kept it to myself. ... I believe that he raped me ... while I was possibly drugged on duty.315

A number of complainants also reported having been sexually assaulted while particularly vulnerable, for example while they were asleep in bed316 or unwell.317 Many of these complainants described an element of feeling deliberately isolated or trapped in some way.318 For example, one complainant reported that while on a training exercise, her manager arranged for her to stay in the same apartment as him while her colleagues stayed in a separate apartment:

[My] manager had complete control and I was only a probationer so could not complain or express my dislike for this arrangement. ... I was in my own bed, asleep and fully clothed with my door shut. I was raped by my [manager]. He did confess but said he thought the sexual act was consensual – meanwhile I was in my own room passed out fully clothed [and] drugged.319

(ii) Indecent assault

A number of complainants told the Taskforce of having experienced indecent assault during regular service in the Army (24 complainants). This includes 11 female complainants and 13 male complainants. Most incidents of indecent assault occurred after the 1990s (17 complainants), including six complainants who experienced indecent assault during the 2000s. All complainants told the Taskforce that the indecent assault was carried out by male alleged abusers, most of whom held a higher rank to the complainant at the time of the abuse (18 complainants).

Complainants reported indecent assault in the form of having been inappropriately touched, fondled or stroked on the breasts, genitals, buttocks or thigh region. A number of complainants reported that they were forced to touch an alleged abuser’s genitals, either with their hand or by having their head pushed into the alleged abuser’s genital region.320 Many of these incidents occurred in the context of unwelcome sexual advances.321

Though most complainants experienced one or two incidents of indecent assault, a number of complainants reported that the indecent assault occurred on an ongoing basis, sometimes over a period of years.322 Some complainants also inferred that they were not the only member of their unit to be subjected to indecent assault.323 One complainant told the Taskforce that he was one of three people targeted by the same Corporal in a single night during the late 1970s:

On our first night all in separate rooms we went to bed about 2100 hours. A very short time later there was a knock at my door and [the Corporal] asked if all was going ok and could he come in to my room. Before I could answer he opened the door and came to the side of my bed and sat on the edge, he was completely naked. He asked if everything was ok and then rubbed his forearm over my testicle and penis area, covered only by a sheet. He asked if it was my goolies he could feel, which I answered yes and then asked if I liked it. I was very confused and did not have any idea of what I should do, how could I ask a Corporal to stop, previously to this, they had unstoppable power over me. I asked him politely to leave. The next morning the other two reported similar stories, however they had been in the Army a good 12 months longer than me and as soon as they saw he was naked simply told him to fuck off, I said I had done the same to save embarrassment.324

A number of complainants reported that the indecent assault involved a physical element of being physically constrained, such as being tied up or held down while the abuse took place.325 In some cases, the indecent assault occurred in very violent circumstances that also constituted physical assault. For example, one complainant described the following incident that occurred as an ‘initiation’ ritual in the late 1990s:
One evening, at sometime between 2300 and 0100, I was asleep when there was a knock at my ... room door. When I opened the door, I was punched in the face and blindfolded or hooded. ... My hands were bound. Once I was subdued in this manner, I was then picked up and placed on a bed. I was then strapped to the bed by some means. I was then stripped naked. Whilst I was strapped to the bed I was repeatedly punched and struck about the body and head. I am unsure as to how many people were involved in this as I was still blindfolded or hooded at this time. At some stage I could smell cigarettes and I felt a burning pain in my groin and smelt burning hair. After the incident I found there to be small burns on my groin. ... All of a sudden the laughs, muffled talking, noise and torture stopped. Then a voice whispered in my ear “don’t say anything to anyone or it will happen again.”

Most incidents of indecent assault reported to the Taskforce took place after hours or while the complainant was relatively isolated from any potential witnesses. However, some complainants reported that the indecent assault took place within formal work hours, and often in full view of their direct superiors to whom they would have otherwise reported the abuse. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that his Sergeant and Lieutenant laughed and watched while he was tied to a tree with a hessian sack placed over his head, his pants were pulled down, and a peer played with his genitals using a stick. Another complainant told the Taskforce that he was indecently assaulted by a Sergeant instructor during a firearms course in the early 1980s:

I suppose it was fairly common for the instructor to press his body against yours to show some aspects of use of a firearm. However, this Sergeant instructor pushed his groin into my hip and moved in a grinding motion. He made sexual comments to me such as “come on, you’ll like it”, and also comments of a homosexual nature. I can recall the exact words he used. While he was rubbing his groin around my posterior he also was rubbing his hand up and down the inside of my thigh. ... I wanted to punch him but knew I couldn’t. So I just had to try and deal with it myself and I didn’t know how to do that. The incident still invades my thoughts to this day.

A number of female complainants experienced indecent assault in a broader context of ongoing sexual harassment. This included inappropriate sexual comments, jokes or questions, gender-based verbal abuse, or unwelcome sexual advances. For example, one complainant described the following incident that took place at Gallipoli Barracks in the early 1990s:

Grabbing my breasts, grabbing my crutch, the harasser rubbed his crutch and body all over me, coming up behind me and pushing his pelvis into my behind. While grabbing or rubbing himself on me he would verbally tell me filthy things that he would like to do to me, extremely graphic and sickening things. It was a nightmare.

(iii) Other forms of sexual abuse

[An initiation ceremony was conducted on me which] involved several members holding me down and another member getting a grease gun and pushing it down the back of my uniform and trying to insert it into or get as close as to my rectum as possible. Once the member with the grease gun was satisfied with where [it] was he then started to pump the grease gun, the end result being your rectum area was covered in grease. This whole event drew rounds of laughter and amusement from those who participated and those who watched. ... As I wanted to fit in I let the incident go and did not make any attempt to report it.

The Taskforce received a number of complaints involving other forms of sexual abuse. Most of the complainants who experienced other forms of sexual abuse were male, and all of the abuse was carried out by male alleged abusers. Many of the behaviours discussed in this section also amount to indecent assault, but have been discussed separately due to the specific characteristics of these practices.

Most other forms of sexual abuse occurred prior to the 1990s and often arose in the context of ‘initiation’ rituals when complainants were of relatively junior rank and in their early years of regular Army service. These reports of sexual abuse typically involved groups of alleged abusers who held a higher rank to the complainant, and occurred in a broader context of ongoing harassment and bullying and physical abuse.

A number of complainants described having experienced abuse similar to blackballing or nuggetting, where a substance such as grease was forcibly applied to their genitals or rectum. For example, one complainant described a ‘ritual’ that was ‘regularly performed on new march ins’, where a group would hold them down and smear their genitals with grease.
before spraying them with a fire hose. Another complainant reported a particularly violent and publicly humiliating incident which occurred in the late 1980s:

I was held down and punched in the stomach and face, my uniform was torn off me and grease was smeared over my body, backside and genitals. Someone tried to place a brush broom handle in my anus. I fought as hard as I could and screamed for [the Corporal and other soldiers] to fuck off. Another soldier took the broom away. I was smeared with oil absorbent. I was tied up with my hands restrained behind me and I was hung from an engine hoist. ... I was wheeled outside and left to hang from a hoist.338

Most complainants who reported experiencing other forms of sexual abuse told the Taskforce that it involved some form of stripping or nudity. In some cases, this involved being spied on while in a state of undress. For example, one complainant reported that an alleged abuser would regularly enter his room while he was changing, or watch him and other members while in the shower.341

(b) Sexual harassment during regular service in the Army

Over the years there have been incidents too numerous to mention that involved being treated unfairly due to my sex. I have always come up against a "boys club" attitude. I felt if you didn't play golf and sleep around you weren't to get anywhere with your career. I felt that I was penalised because I stuck to my morals. This, however, didn't stop the constant battle I faced against men within the Defence Force.342

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 135 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual harassment within the Army (15 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Army).

Of the 169 complainants who experienced abuse during regular Army service at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 30 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual harassment (18 per cent of complaints reviewed). A significant majority of these complainants were women, with only a small number of male complainants who reported having experienced sexual harassment during regular service.

Despite the relatively low incidence of sexual harassment complaints to the Taskforce, this type of abuse is likely to have been much more prevalent within the Army than is indicated by the statistics, for a number of reasons. This is largely because many complaints of sexual abuse may have included behaviour that could also have been categorised as sexual harassment.

The Taskforce received complaints of sexual harassment that took place between 1970 and the late 2000s, with the highest rates of abuse relating to the 1990s and 2000 onwards. Many complainants experienced sexual harassment on an ongoing basis, in some cases over a period of years. For many of these complainants, the sexual harassment began when they were of a relatively junior rank in the Army, such as Private or Corporal.

Sexual harassment reported to the Taskforce also frequently occurred in combination with other forms of abuse, in particular sexual abuse and harassment and bullying. Some complainants told the Taskforce that sexual harassment was instigated as a punishment for having previously made a formal report of abuse or other misconduct to Defence.

For most complainants, the abuse involved at least one member of a higher rank to the complainant. In some cases, complainants reported that the sexual harassment was instigated by one main alleged abuser, but was then subsequently carried out by other peers or staff members. For example, one female complainant described how a systematic campaign of sexual harassment by one member of a higher rank would ‘trickle down through the ranks’, such that a friend she had known for over 10 years said to her on one occasion that ‘he wanted to lick [her] cunt and put his fingers in [her] pussy’.343

Many complainants reported having been subjected to inappropriate comments or questions of a sexual nature. One male complainant described how a male colleague at Lavarack Barracks would ‘talk sex all the time’, and make sexual comments such as suggesting that they should masturbate together. Another male complainant gave a similar account describing how a colleague would often make sexual comments:
The Warrant Officer] spoke inappropriately about sexual matters, talking about my girlfriend. He would ask whether we had sex, and when I didn’t respond, he would expand the comments in hope of a response. He talked about “doggie style” sex and asked whether she “sucked me off”. (He) usually restricted this kind of talk to times when there were no witnesses.347

This type of behaviour was also frequently experienced by female complainants. In particular, a number of female complainants reported that they were subjected to sexual harassment in the form of jokes, questions or false rumours about their sexual behaviour,348 or inappropriate comments about their body.349 For example, one female complainant described an experience of ongoing sexual harassment during her regular Army service. The complainant reported that a number of male colleagues, including the Sergeant in charge of her troop, would watch pornography on her bed and ask questions about whether she would enjoy the same thing. The same complainant also reported that her male colleagues would often joke about rape, sodomy, and having sex with underage girls. On some occasions, these jokes were specifically directed towards the complainant:

While on exercise, we would have to complete piquets during the night. When the nightly piquet list was read out one night, a male member of our troop … made a comment about me saying “I will fuck her in the ear, so she can hear me coming”, because it was his turn to wake me for my piquet. On another occasion, we were sitting around relaxing at our first staging area. The conversation turned to people dying while on exercise. One of the male members of the troop said [about me] “if [she] dies and no-one else was around, would you have sex with her body before reporting it?” Everyone laughed and said they would.350

For some complainants, the sexual harassment reported to the Taskforce involved colleagues making ‘passes’ at the complainant or requesting sex. Of particular concern is the number of female complainants who reported that this occurred within formal work hours, often in full view of other colleagues or superiors.351 Other complainants described being targeted for sexual advances after hours, and often after the alleged abuser had consumed alcohol.352 For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that a male colleague entered her room while intoxicated, and told her that the whole unit hated her and she should leave. He then stated ‘we should have sex’, and attempted to force himself on the complainant. The alleged abuser later denied any memory of the incident.353

In a number of cases, complainants reported that the sexual harassment went further than requests for sex and involved unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature.354 For example, one complainant described an incident where an alleged abuser started massaging her shoulders without asking, while making ‘suggestive comments’.355 There were also multiple complainants who reported receiving inappropriate phone calls or text messages from male colleagues outside of work hours.356 One complainant described how the callers would make statements such as ‘I heard you were a good fuck’ or ‘I heard you were good in bed’.357

A number of complainants described sexual harassment in the form of indecent exposure. This behaviour usually arose in the context of a ‘joke’, and either involved multiple alleged abusers exposing their genitals to the complainant358 or one alleged abuser who deliberately ‘flashed’ the complainant in front of a laughing audience.359 One complainant reported an incident where he awoke to find two sets of male genitals close to his face and lit up by torch light.360

Other complainants reported being called offensive and derogatory names. Examples included being referred to as a ‘slut’,361 ‘skirt’,362 ‘fat arse’,363 ‘front bum’,364 and ‘dumb blonde bimbo’.365 A number of female complainants also reported being subjected to derogatory comments specifically on the basis of their gender. In most of these cases, complainants reported that the comments arose in the context of a hostile and negative attitude towards women in the Army.366 For example, one female complainant described how a male colleague made it clear that he did not like women in the Army, and would deliberately make negative comments about women within earshot, such as ‘they shouldn’t be allowed’ or ‘they are all sluts’.367 Another female complainant told the Taskforce of her experience in the late 1990s:

There was always loads of sexual remarks being made and myself and the very few other females in the unit would have to put up with this and with being sexually assaulted by [the Sergeant] and the other men, eg grabbed on the bottom. We also had to put up with [the Sergeant] telling sexist jokes deliberately in front of us to belittle us. [The Sergeant] also made sexually discriminative comments like telling us that females shouldn’t be in the Army and should only be in the kitchen or the bedroom.368
For many of these complainants, the discriminatory behaviour was often unofficially condoned or in some cases carried out by members of a higher rank directly in their chain of command. At least two complainants stated that after complaining about ongoing sexual harassment, they were told that they were being ‘over-sensitive’. One complainant told the Taskforce that after she reported ongoing sexual harassment and indecent assault to her supervisor in the late 1990s and was told ‘it’s a man’s Army’ and ‘that nothing could be done’:

Instead of reprimanding [the Sergeant], whenever [the Sergeant] would tell a sexist joke in [my supervisor’s] presence [he] would laugh along with the joke. He never told [the Sergeant] to stop making those sorts of jokes or that it was inappropriate. He never took any action against [the Sergeant] and never did anything to help me. My complaint was not only ignored, but [the Sergeant] found out that I’d made it and made my life even worse after that.

Another complainant described a similar reaction when she complained about ongoing sexual harassment by her Section Commander:

[I went] to the front of the Headquarters tent and told him that those sorts of comments upset me and that I was unable to work under such conditions. He replied that he didn’t care, that he was sick of complying with what females want and that he wasn’t going to change. He also said that he had been in the Army a long time and shouldn’t have to change. I was floored by his response. Not only was he my Section Commander, but he was meant to be a leader in our troop.

(c) Physical abuse during regular service in the Army

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 428 cases as raising plausible allegations of physical abuse within the Army (49 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Army).

Of the 169 complainants who experienced abuse during regular Army service at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 84 complainants reported having been subjected to physical abuse (50 per cent of complaints reviewed). This included 72 male complainants and 12 female complainants.

The Taskforce received complaints of physical abuse that occurred between the 1950s and the late 2000s, with a consistent number of complaints of physical abuse that took place in the 1970s, 1980s and 2000s. The highest number of complaints occurred in the 1990s (33 complainants). The majority of complaints of physical abuse during regular Army service took place at Lavarack Barracks (27 complainants) and Holsworthy Barracks (28 complainants). The Taskforce also received complaints of physical abuse that occurred at Gallipoli Barracks, Robertson Barracks, and Puckapunyal Military Area.

Most complainants were of relatively junior rank, such as Privates, at the time of the abuse. The majority of complainants were subjected to physical abuse by multiple abusers and almost all of the alleged abusers were male. Many complaints of physical abuse were characterised by higher ranking staff exploiting their positions of authority to carry out abuse against their subordinates. There was a close correlation between physical abuse and harassment and bullying, with the majority of complainants having experienced both types of abuse during regular Army service.

Most complainants experienced isolated incidents of physical abuse. Complainants told the Taskforce that they were targeted for abuse for a number of reasons including poor work performance, medical conditions, and physical characteristics. Some complainants reported that they were physically abused because the alleged abuser disliked them. In some cases, complainants stated that they were targeted for abuse for unknown reasons, often in circumstances where an alleged abuser had consumed alcohol. Many complainants told the Taskforce of a culture in which physical abuse and harassment and bullying was used to deter members from reporting abuse and punish members who reported the abuse that they experienced or witnessed. This created a fear of retribution around reporting abuse, with one complainant who was subjected to physical assault from a member of a higher rank stating that:

It doesn’t matter how much you complain or seek help, they will lie and wait until the time is right to seek relentless retribution in place, and once that starts, you would wish you were dead.
The nature of the physical abuse experienced by complainants during regular service in the Army is discussed below. This includes physical assault, threats of violence, physical constraint, and physical abuse related to illness or injury.

(i) Physical assault

I was getting dressed when eight men came into my room. The men put a "toggle" rope around my neck and dragged me to the door and the rope was pulled hard above me. ... I reached up to grab onto the rope to stop myself being hung. The men grabbed my arms so that I was hanging. The men were laughing while they hung me. They left me there to hang. ... There were further attacks and the threats were continual.378

Many complainants reported being subjected to physical assault by their peers or members of a higher rank. This included being punched,379 pushed,380 kicked,381 spat on,382 thrown around,383 strangled,384 and having objects thrown at them.385 Physical assaults at some Army barracks had location-specific attributes. The incidents of physical assault experienced by complainants at Lavarack Barracks were often particularly severe, with a number of complainants to the Taskforce reporting being bashed,386 strangled,387 or losing consciousness during a physical assault.388 At Holsworthy Barracks, physical assaults involved being punched or kicked,389 as well as being struck with objects such as rocks,390 or burnt with lit cigarettes.391

The Taskforce also received many complaints involving physical assaults carried out by groups. Some of these complaints involved group bashings by members of equivalent rank under orders from a superior officer.392 Where group bashings were carried out by members of an equivalent rank acting on their own accord, physical abuse usually occurred in the complainant’s room or in front of other soldiers as means of publicly humiliating the complainant.393 In some instances, these assaults appeared to occur as an act of retribution, such as where complainants had been suspected of some kind of offence by their peers.394 One complainant told the Taskforce:

I was tackled by [the Privates]. ... [T]hey continued to kick and punch me and burn me with their cigarettes. After taking a beating for what felt like a life time I ran back to my room where I called my mum and dad crying laying on the floor in the foetal position where I didn’t move until Monday morning ... I then went to the Regimental Aid Post for treatment of my injuries and depression. After seeing the Doctor she wanted me out of the unit for my own safety.395

Complainants also told the Taskforce of being subjected to physical assault as a means of deterring or punishing them from reporting abuse that they experienced or witnessed.396 Complainants who reported abuse carried out by members of their platoon or other soldiers were often targeted with retaliatory physical attacks.397 For example, one complainant was subjected to an incident of physical assault at Holsworthy Barracks in the late 1970s after his platoon found out that he reported an incident of sexual abuse he had previously been subjected to.398 The complainant told the Taskforce that he was pushed, punched and tripped and on one occasion was restrained by several soldiers who twisted his ears and threatened him with further assault if he ‘squealed’.399

A large number of complainants were subjected to physical assaults carried out by supervisors or members of higher rank. Complainants reported physically abusive acts carried out by supervisors that were often intended as a display of authority or as punishment for mistakes made in the course of their work or training. This included having been smacked on the head,400 punched,401 pushed,402 head-butted403 or strangled.404 Many complainants told the Taskforce that supervisors would actively encourage or instruct their peers to carry out abuse. For example, one complainant was physical assaulted under the orders of a superior after he named a fellow soldier as responsible for an incorrectly assigned mess fine. He told the Taskforce that he was deterred from reporting the physical abuse because he thought it would result in further abuse:

The [Sergeant] instructed the soldier to "bash" me for reporting the matter. I was standing at the taxi rank near the main gate at Holsworthy one evening ... when the soldier came up and punched me in the head. ... I did not report the matter because I thought it would get me another belting.405
(ii) Threats of violence
A significant number of complainants reported that they experienced threats of violence during regular Army service. This included a high number of complainants reported being subjected to ongoing verbal threats to cause physical harm. For example, a complainant who served at Holsworthy Barracks in the early 1990s told the Taskforce that:

I had threats of violence and had attempts to get into my room late at night. I didn’t open the door and waited till about 3am to go to the toilet or shave. ... I was not comfortable to go at earlier times and get caught.406

In addition, at least seven complainants reported receiving death threats,407 or were told to kill themselves.408 Some complainants told the Taskforce that threats were also made against their family members.409 For example, one complainant who served in the Army during the early 1990s reported that during a year-long court martial, her alleged abuser contacted her:

[The Warrant Officer] rang my home multiple times with anonymous phone calls and made death threats to my mother, myself, and my daughter who was five years old at the time.410

(iii) Physical constraint
Physical constraint was a commonly reported form of physical abuse experienced by complainants during regular Army service. Complainants reported having been locked in small spaces, such as boxes, cages, cells or guard rooms.411 Acts of physical constraint were often carried out in combination with other types of abuse. Complainants reported incidents of physical and in some cases sexual assault412 which occurred when they were held up by people to be assaulted,413 held down to be assaulted,414 tied to an object,415 or had their hands bound.416

For example, one complainant who was physically constrained during an incident of sexual assault in the late 1980s told the Taskforce:

I was set upon by [the Corporal] and other soldiers from [the unit]. I was held down and punched in the stomach and face. My uniform was torn off me and grease was smeared over my body, backside and genitals. ... I was tied up with my hands restrained behind me and I was hung from an engine hoist. The Corporal told me “keep your mouth shut”.417

(iv) Physical abuse related to illness or injury
A number of complainants experienced physical abuse during regular Army service in circumstances in which supervisors or physical training instructors forced complainants to participate in activities against medical advice or pushed complainants beyond the limits prescribed by medical certificates.418 Some complainants reported being denied medical attention by members of a higher rank, including two complainants who had to undergo surgery as a result of being denied medical treatment while on an exercise.419

Other complainants reported that they were subjected to physical abuse after sustaining an injury in the course of their duties.420 Complainants told the Taskforce that other members accused them of being ‘weak’ and subjected them to verbal and physical abuse during their rehabilitation. For example, one complainant who sustained an ankle injury while on deployment told the Taskforce that:

My injuries were made worse by the unit Personal Training Instructors, as they would force me daily to participate in physical activities that would cause me great pain so that I may combat being a “weak faggot”.421

(d) Harassment and bullying during regular service in the Army
It felt like a constant barrage of abuse that I couldn’t escape. It seemed as though it was the mission of the perpetrators to humiliate and degrade me to break me down and see me suffer.422

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 580 cases as raising plausible allegations of harassment and bullying within the Army (66 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Army).
Of the 169 complainants who experienced abuse during regular Army service at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 128 complainants reported having been subjected to harassment and bullying (76 per cent of complaints reviewed). A significant majority of complainants who experienced harassment and bullying during regular Army service were male (93 complainants).

Complaints of abuse involving harassment and bullying during regular Army service spanned from the late 1960s to 2011, and increased over time, reaching a peak during the 2000s (59 complainants).

The majority of complainants were non-commissioned officers or junior ranked officers at the time of the abuse. Most alleged abusers were members of a higher rank. Males were identified as the alleged abusers in most complaints of harassment and bullying (106 complainants), however, female alleged abusers were typically responsible for harassment and bullying carried out against other females.

Most complaints involved ongoing campaigns of harassment and bullying. A high proportion of alleged abusers acted in groups, and in almost half of complaints involving harassment and bullying during regular Army service, the abuse was carried out by multiple members of a higher rank. This appears to have encouraged other members to engage in this behaviour. For example, a male complainant who experienced a sustained campaign of harassment and bullying while serving at Gallipoli Barracks in the early 1970s explained that:

Initially [the Warrant Officer] was the only person who disliked me, but that quickly changed. His attitude led to others, from the rank of Corporal and up, beginning to bully and victimise me.423

Harassment and bullying included elements of physical abuse in approximately a third of complaints. This was particularly the case in complaints of harassment and bullying that occurred in the late 1980s and 1990s. Some complainants reported experiencing a continuation of the harassment and bullying that occurred during their initial Army recruit and employment training. For example, a complainant who experienced harassment and bullying while undertaking training at Puckapunyal Military Area explained that this abuse increased once he was posted to Robertson Barracks because ‘everyone knew’ what had happened and that he had previously made a formal report of abuse to Defence. The complainant told the Taskforce:

This only increased the bullying and harassment, by both those who had come from there and others I did not know. I became the butt of all jokes. Corporals, Sergeants and now officers singled me out.424

The nature of the harassment and bullying experienced by complainants during regular service in the Army is discussed below, including verbal abuse, unreasonable tasks and demands, interference with career progression, ostracism and social exclusion, and harassment and bullying related to illness or injury.

(i) Verbal abuse

Verbal abuse was the most widely experienced form of harassment and bullying reported by complainants during regular Army service, having occurred at all Army locations across the time period considered by the Taskforce. This included teasing, criticising, name calling, swearing and berating, as well as derogatory and racist remarks.425 Many complainants reported that the verbal abuse they experienced involved being belittled or humiliated in front of others.426 Other complainants told the Taskforce that members of a higher rank sought to exert their authority by threatening the complainant or telling them that they ‘owned’ the complainant in an aggressive manner intended to intimidate.427

Some complainants told the Taskforce that the verbal abuse that they were subjected to escalated over time.428 One complainant who experienced ongoing verbal abuse and other bullying while posted to Holsworthy Barracks in the early 1990s recalled that ‘small taunts after small taunts’ escalated to ‘taunts from soldiers [he] didn’t even know’, as well as threats to have a ‘greasy track pin shoved up [his] anus’.429

Many complainants who experienced verbal abuse reported being subjected to derogatory comments and swear words.430 Some complainants also appeared to have been targeted for verbal abuse after they made a formal report of abuse to Defence,431 subsequently being called a ‘jack’.432 For example, a complainant who reported an incident of sexual assault
against him in the late 1970s was subjected to derogatory comments by his platoon for reporting the abuse, including being called a ‘cross bred coon’. The Taskforce also heard from several complainants who reported being targeted for derogatory homophobic verbal abuse, for example being called a ‘poofter’ or ‘faggot’.

Several complainants reported being subjected to verbal abuse because of their race or ethnicity, with such abuse occurring as recently as 2011. Verbal abuse based on ethnicity or race was experienced by a number of complainants during their time at Holsworthy, Lavarack and Gallipoli Barracks, suggesting a culture of racial discrimination across a number of Army bases. One complainant who served at Lavarack Barracks recounted that ‘there were racist comments and taunts at every corner it seemed’. Another complainant who experienced verbal abuse on account of his ethnicity while undertaking training at Puckapunyal Military Area in the late 1960s stated that ‘the verbal abuse continued throughout my military career’.

Racist verbal abuse during regular Army service largely consisted of name calling, insults and other derogatory remarks on the basis of an individual’s appearance or name. One complainant who was called a ‘nigger’ and ‘stupid dumb black cunt’ in the early 1980s reported that he was singled out on account of his race, and ‘even during the day I would have guys coming up to me to pick a fight’. Complainants who experienced racist verbal abuse also recalled that they were singled out for their eating habits, drinking habits, or speaking their native language.

The Taskforce received a number of reports from female complainants who experienced verbal abuse during regular Army service across all Army bases. Almost all of these complainants experienced ongoing harassment and bullying that was carried out by members of a higher rank. Six female complainants reported verbal abuse on the basis of their gender, related to their physical appearance or fitness. For example, one complainant who served at Gallipoli Barracks described being called a ‘dumb blonde bimbo’ by a senior officer while he berated her for an hour about her performance.

(ii) Unreasonable tasks and demands

Many complainants told the Taskforce of having experienced harassment and bullying during regular Army service in the form of unreasonable tasks and demands. The majority of these complaints involved abuse which occurred in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s at Lavarack or Holsworthy Barracks.

Complainants reported that members of a higher rank would use their positions of authority to instruct them to complete unreasonable tasks that were beyond the standards required of their work or training, or were outside of normal work hours or training periods. This included, for example, being unreasonably and repeatedly given extra duties, singled out to complete drills for longer periods of time than their peers, ordered to complete different and additional activities than their peers, being given humiliating or menial tasks, given tasks with unrealistic timeframes, or being overly and unreasonably supervised. This often had the effect of undermining or sabotaging complainants, by isolating them from their peers or impeding their career advancement. Several complainants reported being subjected to a lack of breaks by superiors, such as being forced to work on allocated rest days or forced to work unnecessarily long hours. For example, complainants reported being ordered to complete early morning physical training, then mess duty, then night guard duty without any breaks. One complainant told the Taskforce that he was continually denied weekend leave and ‘often had to work 14 to 21 days straight’.

Many complainants reported that they were subjected to unreasonable tasks and demands as a form of discipline or punishment. Complainants reported being made to perform menial chores, such as picking up rubbish or cleaning bathrooms and living areas with inadequate tools, carrying out dangerous or dirty jobs, such as using toxic paints or cleaning products without gloves, and being ordered to stand for long periods of time. For example, one male complainant who served at Gallipoli Barracks in the early 1990s reported that he was subjected to harsh disciplinary practices and other forms of harassment and bullying after arriving late for a morning personal training session during his first week of work. The complainant told the Taskforce that:
I saw [the Warrant Officer] after the Physical Training session to learn my fate. He told me I was to be put onto his "Shit list". This was supposed to involve being given all the nasty chores which no-one else likes to do. However there was more to it than that. This was a culture of bastardisation, harassment and intimidation. I was also singled out at every opportunity and made an example of to the others. Often this involved inappropriate comments designed to belittle. I was made to crawl around on my hands and knees picking up rubbish in front of the platoon whilst receiving verbal commentary from [the Warrant Officer]. [The Warrant Officer] asked the female soldiers if I wasn’t the ugliest person they had ever seen.458

Other complainants reported being made to perform menial or unreasonable tasks purely for the purposes of humiliation. For example, one complainant who served at Gallipoli Barracks in the early 1970s told the Taskforce:

> On more than one occasion I was ordered to get a box of steel wool, go to the men’s toilets and scrub the urine scale of the stainless steel panels on the urinal. The scale had accumulated over the years, and the fact that it was there suggested that cleaning it was not a regular task but rather one they had thought up to degrade me.459

A small number of those who experienced unreasonable tasking during regular Army service were women, some of whom reported experiencing sexual abuse or sexual harassment carried out by a male member of higher rank. In one example, a complainant who was subjected to sexual harassment by a male superior while serving at Lavarack Barracks in the late 1990s stated that he also singled her out for unreasonable tasks because of her gender:

> [He] would often knock all the men in our unit off and then ordered me to stay back and perform extra duties like changing the tyres on the vehicles. There was no reason for this except to bully and intimidate me.460

(iii) Interference with career progression

A number of complainants reported that they were subjected to harassment and bullying by their supervisors with the intention of interfering with their career progression.461 Complainants reported that members of a higher rank undermined their work or restricted their progression in the workplace by tainting their reputation,462 administering poor performance assessments or deliberately manipulating performance results.463 Other complainants reported having been denied permission to participate in professional development courses,464 or having been falsely or unreasonably accused of and charged with offences which jeopardised future promotions or resulted in demotion.465 At some Army locations, the use of poor performance appraisals, demotions and withdrawal of security clearances were reported in a high number of complaints of harassment and bullying during the 1990s and 2000s.

At least three complainants told the Taskforce that their supervisor directly threatened to ruin their careers.466 For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that after he actively sought to address certain problems in the workplace, his supervisor threatened to charge him and said: ‘[Y]ou will be fucked and I’ll make sure that happens and no one will ever want to work with you again.’467

(iv) Ostracism and social exclusion

The Taskforce received reports from a number of complainants of harassment and bullying experienced during regular Army service in the form of being socially ostracised and excluded by superiors and peers.468 Several complainants reported that their supervisor intentionally used their authority to exclude the complainants either in the workplace or from social events and work functions.469 Other complainants reported being socially isolated by their superiors and peers on the basis of perceived differences,470 injury or illness,471 reporting abuse,472 or defending others who experienced abuse.473

One complainant who served as a Private during the 2000s was socially excluded because ‘everyone’ knew that he had reported the harassment and bullying he had experienced. The complainant recalled that:

> I was always left out of work related social activities. No-one spoke to me at work. Every person in my work place received a formal birthday celebration during the work day, except me. I was never invited to join in any after work activities, or to be involved in anything where I was not required. [Privates] never hid the fact that they planned activities or outings, doing so purposefully to exclude me.474
Complainants reported that the social exclusion they were subjected to during their regular Army service left them with an inability to socialise or work in a team, few or no friends, and problems with holding down employment.

(v) Harassment and bullying related to illness or injury

Many complainants experienced harassment and bullying related to illness or injury during regular Army service, the majority of which occurred in the 1990s and 2000s.

Complainants told the Taskforce that there was a stigma associated with illness or injury in the Army, as ill or injured soldiers were perceived as being too weak for the infantry, and were considered to be a liability to their unit. One complainant stated that he was treated like a ‘second class citizen’ and ‘punished and bastardised every single day for being injured’.

Complainants commonly reported having had a medical certificate questioned or disregarded in an aggressive manner, or being ordered to participate in activities while ill or in breach of medication restrictions, sometimes under threat of being charged with disobeying a direct order. A large number of complainants also reported being subjected to verbal abuse on the basis of a medical condition such as being called ‘useless’, a ‘liar’, ‘whinger’, ‘malingering’ or a ‘bludger’.

For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

[The Sergeant] called me a hypochondriac whenever I was given medical restrictions. There was an occasion where I was admitted to [hospital], he came to visit me and waited for my visitors to leave before telling me I was “Useless” and an “Oxygen thief”. ... I felt bullied and victimised by [the Warrant Officer Class 2 and Sergeant]. I hated going to work and really felt ill with nausea every time I walked into the building where we worked.

Another complainant who was injured while undertaking training recalled that he was subsequently subjected to verbal abuse on his first regular service posting:

I arrived at [the unit] and in front of all the other [soldiers], I was referred to as the “broken down old cunt” by [the superior].

A consistent theme in complaints of abuse occurring at Lavarack Barracks, which hosts the Samichon platoon for injured soldiers, was the mistreatment of injured soldiers and disregard for their rehabilitation. For example, one complainant who underwent rehabilitation at Samichon platoon told the Taskforce that other, more physically fit, members deliberately sought to humiliate platoon members:

[The Sergeant] and his fellow personal training instructors would often make the platoon walk as a formed body past groups of soldiers doing their own physical training, so that other platoons would believe that Samichon Platoon did not participate in any hard physical training, and would merely go for walks. I believe the personal training instructors did this so that the Platoon’s reputation would be damaged as much as possible.

Further, the complainant recalled that:

On multiple occasions, the platoon was ordered to clean faeces, urine, blood, vomit and broken glass from company level toilet facilities and the Battalions “Boozer” facility, without being supplied with anything other than toilet paper to complete the task.

Complainants told the Taskforce that harassment and bullying at Samichon platoon included verbal abuse by peers or senior staff and mistreatment by medical officers and Personal Training Instructors responsible for rehabilitation. Complainants told the Taskforce that some of the medical officers and Personal Training Instructors responsible for rehabilitating soldiers often misdiagnosed injuries and tasked soldiers with particularly harsh training practices that they could not complete in order to combat their perceived weakness. One complainant who was posted to Samichon platoon recalled that he was ordered to perform an exercise that exceeded his medical restrictions by a superior whom he had reported for a previous incident of harassment and bullying.
[The Sergeant] spotted me from across the basketball court. He approached me and told me I was not working hard enough. He had a smirk on his face. He then told me to ride harder and proceeded to turn the difficulty on the exercise bike up to a level I could not pedal comfortably. He ordered me to stand up and pedal twice and cautioned me (formal order I am forced to obey or will face disciplinary action if I ignore). I stood up and commenced pedalling and told him it was hurting. ... [The Sergeant] leant in close to my face and had a disgusted expression on his face. He then proceeded to tell me "your pain is in your head, mind over matter push through it". The way he treated interactions with me were in a way he disguised as trying to be helpful to avoid his own punishment, but were indeed a form of punishment/empowerment and way to cause pain to myself.488

Another complainant who underwent rehabilitation at Samichon platoon told the Taskforce that the platoon members were verbally abused if they reported experiencing pain during training sessions:

If a member complained about pain being caused by the exercises during the session, [the Sergeant] would instruct the member to "Man the fuck up", or inform us that only homosexuals felt pain, concluding that we all must in fact be homosexual, a conclusion that caused great offence to the homosexuals of the platoon.489

17.6 Locational case studies

(a) Army Apprentice School, Balcombe Barracks and Latchford Barracks

The Army Apprentice School opened in August 1948 at Balcombe Barracks in Victoria, before moving to Latchford Barracks in Bonegilla, near the border of Victoria and New South Wales, in 1983.490 The Army Apprentice School formed an alternative entry path into the Australian Army between 1948 and 1995, the period during which the Army Apprentice Scheme was in operation.491 During its operation, the Army Apprentice School recruited apprentices as young as 14 years of age to undertake apprenticeships over a four-year period in a wide variety of trades.492 In January 1991, the Army Apprentice School was renamed the Army College of TAFE, and in April 1995, the Army Apprentice Scheme ceased operation.493 In December 1995, the Army Logistic Training Centre opened at Latchford Barracks.

It appears that there was public awareness of the existence of harassment and bullying within the Army Apprentice Scheme at the Army Apprentice School during the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1969, the then Minister for Defence reported in Parliament that there had been isolated incidents of harassment and bullying at the Army Apprentice School since 1967, which resulted in the reduction in rank of one apprentice and the discharge of four other apprentices.494

Harassment and bullying at the Army Apprentice School also gained media attention during the 1970s following an incident of assault on a junior apprentice during which senior apprentices broke his nose. Four Army apprentices were found guilty of the assault and sentenced to seven days’ detention with a $40 fine. The Commanding Officer of the Army Apprentice School at the time denied that any hazing or initiation practices took place, and said: ‘I realise that there is this tendency towards bullying in all boarding schools and it would be surprising to me if there weren’t some latent aspects of bullying in this school.’495

The Taskforce received complaints from 68 complainants which were assessed to be within the scope of the Taskforce Terms of Reference and to raise plausible allegations of abuse at the Army Apprentice School, Balcombe Barracks and Latchford Barracks. Below is some statistical information about complaints of abuse at this location:

Abuse by decade:

• 1950s – one complainant;
• 1960s – 22 complainants;
• 1970s – 21 complainants;
• 1980s – 18 complainants;
• 1990s – four complainants; and
• 2000s – two complainants.
Complainants:
- male – 66 complainants;
- female – two complainants;
- 65 complainants were undertaking initial training at the time of the abuse; and
- 58 complainants experienced abuse where the alleged abuser was a senior apprentice.

Category of abuse:
- 29 complainants reported sexual abuse;
- five complainants reported sexual harassment;
- 62 complainants reported physical abuse; and
- 57 complainants reported harassment and bullying.

At the time the abuse occurred, almost all complainants were junior apprentices undertaking initial training within the Army (65 of 68 complainants) and were typically between the ages of 15 and 18 years old. Almost all complainants who experienced abuse at the Army Apprentice School were male (66 complainants).

Complainants reported abuse that took place between the late 1950s and 2009. Abuse occurred predominantly throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (61 complainants). Allegations of harassment and bullying and physical abuse vastly outweighed all other reported types of abuse at the Army Apprentice School. Of particular note is that complainants consistently reported that much of this abuse occurred on an ongoing basis over a period of months or in some cases years, as opposed to isolated incidents of abuse.

Abuse was commonly reported as occurring in the context of initiation or hazing of junior apprentices by senior apprentices, often carried out by individuals in positions of perceived or actual authority. This included harassment and bullying, physical abuse and sexual abuse. Complainants reported that some of this abuse was administered as punishment, while other abuse was carried out for the amusement of senior apprentices and the humiliation of the junior apprentices involved. It appears the structure of the Army Apprentice School was one in which certain senior apprentices in their second or third years of training were assigned positions of authority within the official hierarchy as non-commissioned officers (NCOs): Hut Corporals, Apprentice Corporals, Apprentice Sergeants, and Apprentice Warrant Officers. Twenty-nine complainants described abuse being carried out or instigated by NCOs, who were ringleaders of other senior apprentices in their second and third years of training. This included many situations where Hut Corporals, Apprentice Corporals, Apprentice Sergeants, and Apprentice Warrant Officers would preside over punishments inflicted by other senior apprentices, or would themselves be directly responsible for incidents of abuse.

A number of apprentice musicians also reported being targeted for abuse, specifically by trades apprentices, while other complainants described experiencing abuse often on account of ‘difference’, including ethnic origin, socio-economic status, being physically weaker due to medical conditions, physically smaller or less developed, or due to being younger in age than other apprentices.

Complainants described the initiation or hazing practices they experienced as very well entrenched and as accepted behaviour, and stated that there was ‘no protection’ for the newer intakes. Many complainants told the Taskforce that they had no doubt that members of staff were aware of the abuse which took place.

(i) Sexual abuse
Almost half the complainants who reported abuse at the Army Apprentice School experienced sexual abuse (29 complainants), and all but one of these complainants were male. The highest number of complaints of sexual abuse occurred during the 1960s and 1970s (23 complainants).
A number of complainants experienced sexual abuse carried out by members of staff (nine complainants). In these cases, complainants reported actual penetration, and being touched and fondled in a sexual manner. However, the majority of complaints of sexual abuse involved abuse carried out by senior apprentices (22 complainants), often involving senior apprentices in positions of authority as NCOs (seven complainants).

Some complainants reported having been subjected to training exercises at the behest of NCOs and members of staff which would often involve incidents of sexual abuse (12 complainants). Many reports of sexual abuse occurred within a context of harassment and bullying and physical abuse, and often involved senior apprentices abusing their positions of power.

Other acts of sexual abuse were reported by complainants as having been carried out for the amusement of senior apprentices and the humiliation of the junior apprentices involved. These practices included the elephant walk (described in section 17.4(a) above), and nuggetting (described in section 17.4(a) above).

(ii) Sexual harassment

A small number of complainants reported sexual harassment at the Army Apprentice School (five complainants). All instances of sexual harassment occurred in conjunction with other types of abuse, particularly sexual abuse, and often harassment and bullying. Many complainants experienced sexual harassment by staff or NCOs in the context of training or discipline.

(iii) Physical abuse

A very high proportion of complainants experienced physical abuse at the Army Apprentice School (62 complainants). Most of these complaints involved incidents of abuse during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (58 complainants). Most of these complainants experienced ongoing and sustained campaigns of physical abuse (52 complainants), overwhelmingly in the context of hazing or initiation ‘beasting’ practices by senior apprentices against junior apprentices, and often led or instigated by an NCO. A number of complainants reported that they were hospitalised for their injuries.

Many complainants reported acts of physical abuse carried out by senior apprentices purely for their entertainment, while other complainants reported that senior apprentices would abuse their positions of seniority and retaliate with violence for perceived minor breaches of regulations, or if a junior apprentice showed any resistance. For example, complainants reported being forced to place their hands on a desk before a cup or other object was rammed down onto them.

Complainants told the Taskforce of being made to participate in a large number of games and unusual forms of punishment involving serious acts of violence. As described in section 17.4(c) above, these included:

• Spinner,
• Evacuate,
• Human 10 pins,
• Hot and cold iron,
• Crocodiles and alligators,
• Chooking,
• Crucifixion,
• Regimental scrub, and
• Being made to hang from the rafters and punched and kicked until they fell to the floor.

A number of complainants reported being subjected to forced fighting or grovelling against members of their own intake for the amusement or financial gain of senior apprentices (16 complainants).

A large number of complainants reported being physically constrained during acts of physical abuse (33 complainants). This often involved being held down by a number of people while being assaulted. However, it also included incidents where junior apprentices were trapped in small spaces, including clothes lockers, laundry bags, industrial waste bins or hot water cylinder cupboards.
(iv) Harassment and bullying

A very high number of complainants to the Taskforce experienced some form of harassment and bullying at the Army Apprentice School (57 complainants). Harassment and bullying was reported as having occurred fairly consistently during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (52 complainants). Importantly, almost all of these complainants experienced ongoing and sustained campaigns of harassment and bullying (55 complainants), largely in the context of hazing or initiation practices by senior apprentices.

Almost all complainants reported unreasonable tasking at the instruction of senior apprentices (43 complainants). Complainants told the Taskforce of being forced to perform menial tasks and chores for senior apprentices under threat of physical violence if they did not comply. One complainant described it as an entrenched culture where they would be made to do the ‘dirty work’ of senior apprentices. Complainants reported being forced to polish senior apprentices’ boots and brass, iron their clothes, provide them with loans, cigarettes, and bring them food from the mess. A number of complainants reported that the perceived misdemeanours of other apprentices would result in their whole group paying the price, including the restriction of privileges, having penalties imposed, or having their weekend leave cancelled by NCOs.

Complainants told the Taskforce of being made to do demeaning and unpleasant tasks, which they believed were intended to humiliate them. These included cleaning tasks such as cleaning urinals with toothbrushes or unblocking toilets by hand.

A number of other forms of harassment and bullying were reported to the Taskforce. For example, senior apprentices would throw cold water over junior apprentices while they were using the toilet during winter. A number of complainants reported being subjected to a royal flush, where their head was pushed into a toilet followed by senior apprentices flushing it.

A large proportion of complainants reported being subjected to an arseholing by senior apprentices (21 complainants), where beds and lockers would be deliberately pushed and tipped over, often before a room inspection. Complainants also reported incidents where senior apprentices would empty foot powder over their belongings, as well as throw substances around the toilets or showers and junior apprentices would be made to clean it up, often involving cleaning in the middle of the night.

Of particular note is the hierarchical structure reported by complainants in which senior apprentices assumed disciplinary roles and junior apprentices were often met with violent responses to minor breaches of command or perceived infractions. A number of complainants reported being subject to or witnessing kangaroo courts (10 complainants), where junior apprentices would be summoned into darkened rooms full of senior apprentices, often while blindfolded. During these proceedings, junior apprentices would be charged with spurious and trumped-up misdemeanours and given punishments that invariably included physical assault and other types of abuse.

(b) Army Recruit Training Centre, Blamey Barracks, Kapooka

Blamey Barracks is located within Kapooka, an outer suburb of Wagga Wagga, New South Wales. The main function of this base is the Army Recruit Training Centre (ARTC Kapooka), originally established in 1951 as the 1st Recruit Training Battalion, and still in operation today. All Army personnel are required to undertake an 80 day initial training course at ARTC Kapooka prior to commencing Initial Employment Training. In addition, since 1993, recruit training to be part of the Army Reserve have also been required to undertake a 28 day course at this location. Initially an all-male training establishment, female recruits have trained alongside males at ARTC Kapooka since 1985.

The Taskforce received complaints from 119 complainants which were assessed to be within the scope of the Taskforce Terms of Reference and to raise plausible allegations of abuse at ARTC Kapooka and Blamey Barracks. This constitutes the highest number of complaints received by the Taskforce regarding any location in the Army. Below is some statistical information about complaints of abuse at this location:
Abuse by decade:
- 1950s – two complainants;
- 1960s – eight complainants;
- 1970s – 28 complainants;
- 1980s – 48 complainants;
- 1990s – 20 complainants; and
- 2000s – 13 complainants.

Complainants:
- male – 101 complainants;
- female – 18 complainants; and
- 117 complainants were undertaking initial training at the time of abuse.

Category of abuse:
- 30 complainants reported sexual abuse;
- 20 complainants reported sexual harassment;
- 79 complainants reported physical abuse; and
- 85 complainants reported harassment and bullying.

The Taskforce received high numbers of complaints of abuse at this location, largely due to the sheer number of personnel that pass through ARTC Kapooka as a pre-requisite for any further training in the Army, and the long period over which ARTC Kapooka has been in operation. At the time of abuse, almost all complainants were recruits undertaking initial training within the Army (117 out of 119 complainants).

The Taskforce received reports of abuse that took place at ARTC Kapooka and Blamey Barracks between the late 1950s and 2011, with a high number of complaints relating to the 1970s and 1980s (76 out of 119 complainants). The most common types of abuse experienced by complainants at this location were harassment and bullying (85 complainants) and physical abuse (79 complainants). The majority of these complainants reported that the harassment and bullying occurred in combination with physical abuse. Approximately half of the complainants who experienced harassment and bullying or physical abuse reported that it occurred during the 1980s (45 complainants).

The vast majority of complainants who experienced abuse at this location were male (101 complainants). This can be partly attributed to the fact that the first intake of female recruits at ARTC Kapooka was in 1985, and historically, the proportion of female recruits has been consistently low. The most common type of abuse experienced by female complainants was sexual abuse (10 complainants). Of these complainants, more than half experienced ongoing sexual harassment in addition to sexual abuse (six out of 10 complainants).

Most of the abuse reported to the Taskforce was carried out by members of staff (90 complainants). However, there was also a high incidence of abuse where the alleged abusers were other recruits (44 complainants), and many complainants experienced multiple incidents of abuse carried out by both training staff and other recruits. A number of complainants told the Taskforce that though some or all of the abuse they experienced was directly carried out by other recruits, they believe it was unofficially condoned or in some cases actively encouraged by members of staff. Many complainants reported some or all of the abuse they experienced was carried out by multiple alleged abusers (82 complainants), and many reported that the abuse was witnessed by peers or other staff members, adding to the humiliation they experienced.
(i) Sexual abuse

The Taskforce received a number of complaints of sexual abuse at ARTC Kapooka and Blamey Barracks (30 complainants). This included complaints of sexual abuse from 20 male complainants and 10 female complainants. In all cases of sexual abuse reported to the Taskforce, the abuse was carried out by male alleged abusers.

There are noticeable differences in the experiences of sexual abuse between male and female complainants. The majority of sexual abuse reported by male complainants occurred during the 1980s (nine complainants), with the most recent involving an incident that occurred in the early 1990s. Sexual abuse of male complainants typically involved multiple alleged abusers of various ranks, including fellow recruits, training staff or other Army personnel of a higher rank to the complainant at the time of the abuse. By contrast, sexual abuse reported by female complainants occurred between the late 1980s and the late 2000s, with half of all female complainants having experienced sexual abuse after 2000 (five female complainants). Sexual abuse reported by female complainants was more likely to be carried out by a single male alleged abuser, mostly a member of staff.

The Taskforce received a number of complaints of sexual assault (nine complainants), of which over half involved female complainants. All female complainants who reported sexual assault at this location experienced actual penetration by an alleged abuser’s penis, digital penetration, or were forced to perform oral sex. Sexual assault reported to the Taskforce by male complainants was more likely to involve penetration by a foreign object.

Indecent assault was the most common form of sexual abuse reported to the Taskforce at this location (12 complainants). Incidents of indecent assault were largely carried out by members of staff (eight complainants), and complainants reported being inappropriately kissed, or having their genitals fondled or stroked. For many complainants, the indecent assault also involved an element of forced nudity, such as being required to take off their clothes in order to have their genitals or breasts touched or inspected. In addition, a small number of complainants reported being subjected to forced masturbation. This involved having fellow recruits masturbating and ejaculating on the complainant’s face or body, or being made to strip naked and play with one’s own genitals while others watched.

Complaints regarding sexual abuse at this location involved a relatively high incidence of alcohol consumption, either by the complainant, the alleged abuser, or both. Many of these complainants reported that they felt pressured to drink by members of staff, other Army personnel more senior to them, or by fellow recruits, and at least two complainants reported that they were sexually abused after having consumed alcohol for the first time.

A number of complainants also reported that the sexual abuse they experienced was recorded or filmed by other peers who witnessed the abuse.

(ii) Sexual harassment

Of the 119 complainants who reported abuse at ARTC Kapooka and Blamey Barracks, 20 complainants experienced at least one incident of sexual harassment. The majority of this abuse occurred during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s (10 complainants), and all reported incidents of sexual harassment involved male alleged abusers.

Approximately half of the complainants who experienced sexual harassment were women (nine complainants). This figure is particularly significant considering that female complainants made up only 15 per cent of the total number of complainants who reported abuse that occurred at this location (18 out of 119 complainants). Most of these female complainants told the Taskforce that they experienced sexual harassment as part of an ongoing campaign of abuse, whereas male complainants were more likely to experience an isolated incident of sexual harassment.

For all complainants, the sexual harassment reported to the Taskforce was generally carried out by members of staff (15 complainants), and often involved a number of alleged abusers. Some complainants reported that the sexual harassment was instigated by one main alleged abuser, but was perpetuated by other peers or members of staff.
The types of sexual harassment reported to the Taskforce included inappropriate comments or invasive questions of a sexual nature, exposure to pornographic material, indecent exposure, and intimidating behaviour which led to a fear of sexual assault. Some complainants felt that these practices were part of a broader culture at ARTC Kapooka, whereby recruits were continually exposed to highly sexualised pictures and degrading comments about women.

(iii) Physical abuse

The Taskforce received a high proportion of complaints relating to physical abuse at ARTC Kapooka and Blamey Barracks (79 complainants), most of which occurred during the 1980s (38 complainants). Of the 79 complainants who experienced physical abuse, 56 complainants reported that the abuse took the form of an ongoing campaign, often carried out by multiple alleged abusers. Most of the physical abuse reported to the Taskforce was experienced by male complainants (74 complainants). Though only five female complainants reported having experienced physical assault at Kapooka, many female complainants experienced sexual abuse during which they were physically constrained or forcibly restrained.

Most reports of physical abuse involved physical assault, such as punching, kicking or strangulation. A number of complainants reported that they were held down or otherwise physically constrained while the assault was carried out. A large number of complainants also reported that they were subjected to death threats or threats of physical assault (27 complainants). This often occurred in combination with other types of abuse, often as a method to ensure that complainants complied with an alleged abuser’s orders or did not report other incidents of abuse.

A noticeable trend in complaints relating to physical abuse at Kapooka was the use of rifles or guns (18 complainants), including a number of cases where complainants were struck in the head with a rifle or had a loaded gun pointed at their head.

Most incidents of physical abuse by other recruits were carried out at night, and often involved complainants who were singled out for abuse on account of poor performance during training. Abuse often took the form of blanket bashing, where complainants awoke to fellow recruits punching, kicking or hitting them with hard items while a blanket was pinned over their face so they could not identify their alleged abusers (nine complainants). Some complainants reported that they had difficulty sleeping as a result of the abuse they experienced.

Complainants also described a culture at this location where injury or illness was associated with weakness and was not to be tolerated. A number of complainants reported being labelled a malingerer or accused of faking an illness, and targeted for harassment and bullying on this basis. For a number of complainants this involved physical abuse resulting from either a denial of medical treatment or forced participation in training exercises against medical advice (12 complainants).

(iv) Harassment and bullying

Of the 119 complainants who experienced abuse at ARTC Kapooka and Blamey Barracks, 85 complainants experienced some form of harassment and bullying. For approximately half of these complainants, abuse occurred during the 1980s (45 complainants), and 73 complainants experienced an ongoing campaign of harassment and bullying sustained throughout their time at this location.

The most common form of harassment and bullying reported to the Taskforce was verbal abuse from peers and members of staff (65 complainants). Many complainants reported that they were verbally abused on the basis of their race or ethnicity. Other complainants experienced verbal abuse on account of their physical appearance, perceived religious or political beliefs, or sexuality.

Complainants also reported having experienced harassment and bullying in the form of harsh training or disciplinary practices by members of staff (40 complainants). Complainants described being made to hold rifles straight out in front of them while travelling between classes, perform ‘leaps’ (described in section 17.4(d)(v) above), or being forced to clean training or living areas with a toothbrush.
A number of complainants also experienced harassment and bullying that occurred outside of formal training hours, which typically involved multiple alleged abusers, including fellow recruits and Army personnel of a higher rank to the complainant at the time of the abuse. The most common form of harassment and bullying that occurred after hours involved interference with a complainant’s property (14 complainants). This included locker break-ins, vandalism or theft of uniform and equipment, or having personal property thrown out of a window.

17.7 Individual case studies

(a) Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1950s

(In) the early 1950s I enlisted at the Royal Military College, Duntroon (RMC) as a Staff Cadet. I was 16 years of age. ... I served at RMC for a total of 44 days. During that time I was subject to continuous abuse, indecent assault, harassment, bastardisation, degradation, intimidation, physical and mental abuse from senior cadets at RMC. The senior cadets took a particular perverse interest in me as a new recruit and I was subjected to the most intrusive unwelcome attention imaginable.

Specific types of abuse that I suffered would include being forced to sit publicly naked on the toilet seats for long periods so as to warm the seat for senior cadets (regardless of duties that I was required to do or my own time commitments). I was forced to stand naked in the common area showers for extended periods to ensure the shower temperature was just right for the senior cadets and to adjust the temperature as required. I was then required to stand in an adjoining shower to meet the needs of senior cadets such as picking up their soap, scrubbing their body parts as requested. This was sometimes done naked but also sometimes in full uniform.

Victimisation included being made to stand alone for indefinite periods in the centre of RMC parade ground during lunch breaks etc with a rifle above my head and/or run for continuous periods of time doing circuits of the parade ground, again with the rifle above the head until I was told to stop. This always felt like it was never going to end and sometimes went on for hours in the late afternoon. ...

At the RMC most, if not all, of the authority was vested in the hands of the senior recruits on a seemingly unsupervised basis. They ruled every moment of my life at RMC and seemed intent on trying to outdo each other in devising the most inane and degrading methods of humiliation they could impose on the junior cadets.

Most of these methods had some sort of sexually oriented basis. Others seemed to be designed for the maximum enjoyment of the perpetrators and maximum demoralisation of the recipient. The RMC culture maintained and enforced these abuses.

I was not given any relief or break even at night. I would hope that the physical and mental abuse would at least stall for long enough to allow me to get some sleep and recover and be able to prepare for the following day in training or whatever tasks were planned. Such preparation never happened. I was always extremely tired due to forcing myself to remain alert and awake during “sleeping” hours so as to be prepared for the regular intruders.

I was abused in multiple locations including my quarters, toilets, showers and within RMC grounds. ... I appealed to the regular Army staff and non-commissioned officers to give me some form of relief or protection. ... I did not want to be spending most of my time fending off senior cadets’ advances and dealing with their perverse requests, abusive behaviour, continued victimisation and blatant humiliation and degradation of me. All I wanted to do was to be an effective member of the Australian Defence Force and their actions were preventing me from doing so.

I do not believe my complaints of the abuse to the senior officers were ever investigated but it was clear that whenever I reported anything the bullying and abuse would always escalate so I can speculate that the reports were relayed to the perpetrators who took exception to this and ramped up the abuse to teach me a further lesson.
I was eventually hospitalised. Clearly the senior cadets’ efforts had been effective and I was so exhausted and run-down that my body all but gave up. My spirit and self-confidence was broken. ... My career goal of becoming an Army officer ended after just 44 days due to the abuse, harassment and total intrusive domination of my existence at RMC by the senior cadets. Their actions ensured that I was effectively blocked from even laying the basic foundations of my long planned military career. ...

I blame the culture of the military in allowing this to occur despite my protestations to senior officers and non-commissioned officers and their failure to intervene and assist me when my lifelong dream was being systematically destroyed. I carry these experiences with me every day and to this day I still feel embarrassment and shame about the ugliness of these events which crushed my spirit as a 16 year old. ...

Last year, at age 75, I finally summoned the courage to divulge the sordid truth to my family. Time will not heal but may help us understand the massive impact that these life changing events have had on all of us.552

[b] Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s

I joined the Army in [the early 1970s], as [an apprentice]. I was 15 and a half years of age at this time. Upon joining the Army I was at first posted to the Australian Army Apprentices School, at the Balcombe Barracks. ...

Not long after being accommodated in the junior intake guts huts an incident happened. ... [M]y intake was shown around the barracks by the Platoon Sergeant. During the course of our introduction to the barracks, he warned us that it was Crab Night. At the time, I did not know what this meant, I later learnt that 100 days before an intake graduates, they would have what was called “Crab Night”. We were warned by the Platoon Sergeant earlier in the day to lock ourselves in our huts after mess, but he did not say why. ...

At dusk, we turned out our lights and some of the other apprentices barricaded the doors of our hut. During the course of the evening, I heard screaming coming from other areas of the barracks. I became aware that a couple of dozen [fourth year] apprentices, between 30 and 40 [third year] apprentices and about 120 [second year] apprentices were involved in Crab Night.

At around about 8pm I was sitting on my bed, when I heard noises coming from the southern door. The other apprentices in my hut rushed to the door to block it. Despite trying to block the door, about six to eight blokes came rushing into the hut. Once they were in, they instructed the other apprentices to return to their bed-spaces. I was already in my bed-space. They then started to question everyone in the hut about what trade they were in. They ransacked our lockers and turned our beds upside down. Some of the apprentices were physically assaulted and a few were dragged to the toilets and had their heads flushed down the toilets, and then they left.

The place looked like a hurricane had been through. After they left, the apprentices in my hut put all of our belongings away and tidied up the overturned beds.

Less than an hour later, another group did the exact same thing. They forced their way into our hut, upturned the beds and threw peoples’ belongings around. Again, there were about six to eight of them. This happened four or five times before midnight. ...

Shortly after midnight, I was asleep on my bed when I was woken by about six to eight apprentices in my hut who were engaging in Crab Night. They started to question me about where I was from and what my trade was. They called me names, like “gay apprentice” ... I got called a “fucking sprog homo” and other derogatory comments. I was told to shut up, and that if I called out or resisted, they would make it harder on me. I was rolled onto my stomach by about four of them, and held down. One of them tried to insert a stick into my anus, but I was wearing pyjamas. I believe the stick was either a broomstick or a toilet brush. They obviously couldn’t get the stick into my anus due to my wearing pyjamas, so they physically pulled my pyjama pants down. I braced up to try to stop them inserting the stick into my anus, but it just made them use more force. They spent about 10 seconds inserting the stick into my anus and verbally insulting me and then they turned my bed over sideways, so that I fell onto the floor. I stayed on the floor until they had left the hut. They took the
stick with them when they left. Once they were gone, I got up and started to make my bed. While I was making my bed, I was experiencing so much pain that I went to the toilet to see what sort of injuries I had. I wiped myself with some toilet paper and saw that I was bleeding from the anus. I stayed in the toilets until the bleeding had stopped, which took about 10 minutes. I threw my underpants in the bin, because they were stained with blood, and then I returned to my bed, where I went back to sleep.

None of the other males in my hut came to my aid. It must have been obvious what was being done to me, because one of the males was verbally directing the others to put the stick up my anus. I am certain that the others in my hut were warned to stay where they were and not interfere. I did not discuss what happened to me with any of the other apprentices in my hut.

I have never spoken of this incident for fear of reprisal until I sought trauma counselling near the end of my 39 year 11 month Army career.

(c) Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s

[In the late 1980s] I enlisted in the Australian Regular Army as a recruit. I was 17 years of age. ...

I was subjected to assault, bastardisation, sexual harassment, harassment, bullying and other forms of unacceptable behaviour whilst posted to Kapooka. The abuse was carried out by one Corporal, a Platoon Sergeant, an Anglican Vicar and also by my fellow recruits.

Within the first few days of arriving at Kapooka, I was made to strip naked, while standing on a table in front of several others (including a female). I was then asked to perform sexually explicit actions, including bending over to show my anus and playing with my genitals, while they laughed and made degrading and humiliating comments about my body and genitals, the length of my penis and by body hair. ...

During my time at Kapooka, I was constantly threatened with violence, and even with death. The worst death threat made to me was when [the Corporal] told me that he could kill me and make it look like an accident. He used examples, such as drowning me in a large pond while on exercise, or having me “accidentally” shot.

I was frequently bullied by [the Corporal], about my lack of strength and ability. He reminded me often that I was the worst recruit in the platoon. He seemed to enjoy punishing my section, and telling the other recruits that it was my fault.

I was threatened with violence for minor indiscretions, such as tying my bootlaces the wrong way. I would then be punished by being made to perform tasks. These included being made to do push ups while [the Corporal] read adult magazines, or being made to make a bed dozens of times for [the Corporal] to then tear apart. ... I was also told that I would be beaten if I went to the toilet at night. ...

I was threatened with violence by all the Corporals with the platoon, as well as by the Sergeant and several recruits. After [the Corporal] had commenced his bullying of me, the other recruits began to join in with him, making fun at my expense. I was constantly called a cunt, moron and lazy prick. ... When I dared to approach another Corporal and tell him that [the Corporal] was being unfair, he promptly passed this on to [the Corporal], who told me that he would kill me if I went behind his back again.

[The Corporal] physically assaulted me on three occasions. On the first, he tipped me out of bed. This was because I had apparently not made it properly. There were no witnesses to this. On the second, he forced my hand into boiling water. This was because I had dropped a knife into the washing tub. [Another recruit] was a witness to this. On the third occasion, he forced me to lie on the ground and shout derogatory things about myself, while he stood over me with his foot on my neck.

A fellow recruit advised me to allow other recruits to assault me by way of gang bashing. This was so they would then have got all their ill feelings out of their systems and would supposedly treat me better afterwards. A date for the bashing was arranged, but I got myself put in hospital to avoid it. ...
[The Corporal] seemed to enjoy watching me fail and then making fun of me. On one occasion, when I could not climb a length of rope, he pushed me off the rope, into the sand and told the other recruits that I was a waste of space. The other recruits laughed. [The Corporal] also ordered me to run the rest of the platoon off their feet. This caused several injuries, which I then suffered the blame for.

[The Corporal] often made fun of me in a sexual way, such as calling me a “compulsive wanker”. I was exposed to pornographic material by other recruits, and when I told [the Corporal], he told me to grow up. Sexual talk within the barracks was almost constant. …

It seemed that no-one in the platoon ever spoke, everyone screamed, yelled and shouted. Rarely was my actual name used; I was called cunt, faggot, fuckhead or slug.

On one occasion, I had hurt my back. The doctor … gave me a handful of pills and told me to swallow them. When I asked what they were, he ordered me to take them. After swallowing them I passed out and woke up in bed completely naked. I was frightened that perhaps I was going to be poisoned or assaulted or operated on without my consent.

[The Corporal] constantly berated me for going to [the doctor], making me feel as if I was doing the wrong thing by being ill.

I escaped the Army in the only way I could think of, by going AWOL. In total I served for less than two months. …

Since my time in the Army, I have suffered regular bouts of depression, anxiety, alcoholism and feelings of worthlessness. I have considered suicide. I believe the fear I was in during that time crippled my ability to live a normal life. I believed during that period that I would be murdered, and the feelings of anxiety, mistrust and anger have stayed with me always. It has affected my ability to have normal relationships, due to a deep seated fear. …

I can only think of the outrage society and media would bring forth if a 17 year old, working somewhere like McDonalds or Coles, was forced to go through what I did, but it seems that because I was a 17 year old in the Army it doesn’t count. …

As a result of the abuse I suffered, I have developed psychiatric conditions, including Depression, Anxiety, a Social Disorder and Alcoholism. I have required medical treatment and medication for my conditions. … I feel that one of the reasons the abuse had such a significant impact on me was my age at the time [17].

I feel that the way the Army treated me has had a permanent and lasting effect on my mind and emotions, and that this has ruined my life.554

(d) Female Army member, [Locations redacted], late 1980s to late 2000s

[In the late 1980s], after completion of a Sergeants’ Mess function I was indecently assaulted by one of my fellow male trainees, three times in the same night. The events occurred as follows.

I and another trainee were exiting from the TV room on the ground floor of our accommodation block. At the same time five other male trainees … were just returning from the Sergeants’ Mess after having been drinking for several hours after the function. One of the trainees had quite seriously harassed me … and had made numerous sexually aggressive remarks to me. This trainee, with the assistance of the other trainees, including the one I was in the TV room with corralled me in the stairwell and prevented me from going to my room. I was pushed towards the TV room by the trainee who had harassed me earlier in the evening. I attempted to hold onto the door frame but my fingers were prised off by the other trainees as I was pushed into the room by the aggressor. The door was closed behind us and my attacker proceeded to attempt to remove my clothes and attack me. During these events I ended up on the floor with the aggressor on top of me telling me to shut up so he could get this over and done with. I was screaming by this time for the others to come and get him off me. About five minutes had passed before the other trainees came back into the room and pulled him off me. I immediately went upstairs to my room.
Five minutes later one of the trainees knocked on my door and asked me to come out. He said that if X apologised then I wouldn’t need to report the incident and we could forget about it. He brought X to my room (previously he did not know my accommodation) and told him to apologise. Instead he again assaulted me by attempting to kiss me and had to again be pulled away. By this time I was very distressed and went back into my room. Unfortunately I failed to lock the door. I went to bed. Ten minutes later the door to my room opened and X came into my room naked. He attempted to pull the bedsheets off me and tried to get into bed with me. I kept the bed linen wrapped around me as tightly as possible. Eventually he gave up and laid on the mat next to my bed and began masturbating. He also managed to get his left hand under the sheets and touch my thigh. Once he stopped I waited until he wasn’t moving and moved to the end of the bed grabbed my bathrobe and ran to the door screaming for someone to help me. No one physically saw him in my room although they saw him in the corridor naked. I returned to my room locked my door and went back to bed. …

As a consequence of reporting the incidents to the police I then became the subject of vilification, victimisation, bullying, abuse (verbal and physical) by the student body, aided by some staff members. There was no protection available to me as the victim and I had to live, work and train with those involved in the attack for the next 15 months prior to the case being heard [in court]. There were also no restrictions on the contact between the accused and the witnesses so they were able to freely associate at all times from when the incident occurred to the court case. During this time I was subjected to baiting (male trainees gathering evidence to prove that I was sexually promiscuous), being spat at, having items thrown at me, having a car driven at me at speed by the accused and missing hitting me by about a foot, … being spied on and reported to [a senior officer] to list just a few methods used to force me to drop the charges or to leave my job. …

As a result of experiencing the initial attack, the victimisation and the subsequent court case, I had not been able to report other significant sexual attacks that occurred during my career as there were no witnesses to these events and I did not believe that if I reported them that I would be believed as I wasn’t believed when there were ‘witnesses’. During my career I have been raped twice, once in the early 1990s by a member of the staff on [a training course] and once by a member of my unit. …

Early 1990s – On the final night of my course, at the course dinner, I was again subjected to a sexually based assault. I had been drinking throughout the dinner and was very drunk. I was making my way back to my room when I was accosted by a [Sergeant] on the course. He wanted to have sex with me. I kept on saying no and that I wanted to go back to my room so I could go to bed. Somehow we ended up in the course car park which was a very public area. The [Sergeant] was trying to kiss me and take my clothes off and I continued to try to get away. He wanted me to fellate him. As I said earlier I had been drinking and the affect of the alcohol was getting worse to the point that I can’t remember everything that happened. I recall at some stage being in my room with the perpetrator. I cannot remember if we had sex or not. What I can remember is that I did not want it to happen and I kept saying no until the alcohol affected me to the point that I could no longer protect myself. As a large proportion of this had all taken place in a public place and we had been seen by other trainees on the course I was vilified for having “sex” with an instructor.

Early 1990s – On completion of [a] function most unit members were drunk, including myself. We returned to the hotel and went to the bar to continue drinking. I am not sure what time I left to return to my room, but on my way to the lift I was accompanied by a member of [my unit] who offered to escort me. I accepted and we got into the lift. He asked me what floor I was on and I replied the forth and he pushed the button to the seventh floor. I asked him had he pushed the button for my floor which he said yes. When we got out of the lift I realised that we weren’t on my floor and I turned around to go back into the lift. He grabbed me by the arm and dragged me back onto the floor. I told him to let me go as I wanted to go to my room. He continued to drag me away from the lift and said that there was something he wanted to show me. I told him I wasn’t interested and tried to return to the lift but he continued to hold on to me. He said it would only take a couple of minutes. I told him ok I would look and then I was going back to my room. He led me up a small flight of stairs into a meeting room. I put my things on the table and asked him to show me what was so interesting. I ascertained that he had brought me into the room to have sex with me. I picked up my things and walked out the door and was halfway down the steps before he grabbed me again. I resisted being pulled back and managed to get to the bottom of the stairs where he pulled me back onto the small corner landing. By this stage I was very drunk and could no longer stand up properly or
fight him off. I remember lying on the landing with my pants down and the assailant getting ready to insert his penis. All I can remember is screaming no in my head but not being able to speak. The assailant then had sex with me. When it was finished I got dressed as best I could and went to my room.

This event occurred three weeks after I had been hospitalised for 10 days with severe clinical depression. I was receiving treatment at the time, however it was proving difficult to reintegrate back into the unit as other members were avoiding me and deliberately creating barriers. ...

In particular during the period from [the early 2000s] to my medical discharge in [the late 2000s], I was subjected to numerous sexual irregularities including:

- The members of the unit having bets as to who would sleep with me first. The then [unit leader] had become aware of this first and ordered me not to get involved as he had it in hand. I am not sure what the outcome was but being the target of such a campaign was both professionally and personally destabilising.
- Being close to being punched closed fist into the face by a digger in [another unit] without provocation.
- Having rumours spread regarding a supposed affair between myself and the unit Commanding Officer.
- Being told by a unit member ... that even though everyone thought I was a bitch he liked me and that we’d root before I left the unit.
- Being sexually harassed by my [unit leader] (who asked about my sexual life and if I had any partners during a career interview and offered to give me a foot rub after an anniversary dinner). ... This occurred on the same night as the above point. ...

Although these events occurred [many] years ago, they significantly affected my career resulting in my medical discharge in [the late 2000s]. These incidents may appear insignificant when taken individually, but cumulatively they had the affect of ending my career. I was no longer able to manage my responses to these incidents. ...

During my career I was continually required to work with many of those involved with the [1980s] incidents. Initially the interactions were to me directly but information and rumours were promulgated that undermined my career. These rumours drew a completely incorrect picture of who I was and perpetuated the story of me being a bitch and untrustworthy and incompetent. ...

The humiliations I endured were catastrophic to my mental wellbeing and began a long battle with severe depression which I still have to manage today. I am currently under psychological care and take medication to manage my depression.ºººº°

(e) Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s

[In the late 2000s] I enlisted in the Australian Regular Army as a Private. I was 20 years of age.

I was bastardised, harassed, sexually harassed, bullied and discriminated against during my service. ... The abuse was carried out by members of my troop, primarily by [a Corporal], the Section Commander. The abuse commenced [a year after I enlisted]. It did not stop until I discharged. ...

I was the only female in our troop. The sleeping arrangements involved me and three other male soldiers sleeping side by side in stretchers in a tent. It was frequent practise during this time for the other male soldiers in my troop to watchpornographic films on the laptop that was situated directly in front of my stretcher. Sometimes I would wake up from a sleep and find some of them sitting on my stretcher talking about the film. They would ask me questions such as “would you like it if someone did that to you?” and “have you ever done that?” The other soldiers continued watching pornographic films in front of me until a member of another troop made a complaint. After this complaint, it was common belief that I was the one who had made the complaint. I was ostracised and removed myself from the group as a result. ...

While on exercise, we would have to complete piquets during the night. When the nightly piquet list was read out one night, a male member of our troop, [another Private], made a comment about me saying “I will fuck her in the ear, so she can hear me coming”, because it was his turn to wake me for my piquet.
On another occasion, we were sitting around relaxing at our first staging area. The conversation turned to people dying while on exercise. One of the male members of the troop said [about me] “if [she] dies and no-one else was around, would you have sex with her body before reporting it?” Everyone laughed and said they would. …

The final straw for me was when I was dropped off a few kilometres away from the staging area to collect ammunition. [A Private] was going to pick me up. When he arrived, I grabbed onto the door handle and he drove off. I fell off the side of the truck and had to walk all the way back to camp. …

I was deployed with my unit [in the late 2000s] for [an exercise]. My section commander was [a Corporal]. … [The Corporal] started talking about the female [second in charge] of the regiment. He talked about how he didn’t like her and referred to her as a “dirty bitch”. He went on to say that “I would donkey punch the shit out of that bitch until she bleeds”. This was all because she wanted us to move some trucks. I was very upset by this statement and [the Corporal] and [the Private] continued to talk about her explicitly and act out how it would look to “cork screw her in the ass”. …

Later that afternoon [the Corporal] and other members of the troop were reading pornographic magazines, making comments and comparing which female soldiers the models resembled. … Again on that day, [the Corporal] was in an adjacent tent, talking to another troop member about women in the Army. He was speaking loudly enough that he knew I could hear him. He said things like “they shouldn’t be allowed” and “they are all sluts”. I was furious with these comments and went into the tent. I asked [the Corporal] if I could have a word with him. I then went with him to the front of the [headquarters] tent and told him that those sorts of comments upset me and that I was unable to work under such conditions. He replied that he didn’t care, that he was sick of complying with what females want and that he wasn’t going to change. He also said that he had been in the Army a long time and shouldn’t have to change. I was floored by his response. Not only was he my Section Commander, but he was meant to be a leader in our troop. …

During another incident on this field trip, I was in the tent where we all slept. [Two Privates] were in their swags laughing. I soon realised what was happening, as they both had their phones on loudspeaker and were watching porn and masturbating. I yelled at them to turn it off, but they kept going. When [the Corporal] heard what had happened, he thought it was funny and joined in that night. I could hear them masturbating and they all admitted to it, saying “I got one off that time”. …

[The Corporal] would have sexually explicit conversations about women on a daily basis. Conversational topics included forced sodomy, intercourse with under-age girls and degrading women sexually. There are some of his specific comments I can recall, which include “if she’s old enough to bleed, she’s old enough to breed” and “hit em before the hair does”, in relation to under-age girls. Once, referring to forced sodomy on women, he said “make em squeal like a pig”. …

I feel that my experiences in the Army were extremely negative. I had always hoped to serve my country and give back to the ANZACs and my grandfather by completing four years of service. Unfortunately, the behaviours I was subjected to prevented this from happening.556

---

3 Above.
4 Above.
5 Above.
6 Above.
7 Above.
8 Above.
15 Australian War Memorial, Puckapunyal, note 9.
16 Department of Environment, Puckapunyal Military Area, viewed 26 September 2014, http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;search=state%3DVIC%3Blist_code%3DCHL%3Blegal_status%3D35%3Bkeyword_PD%3D0%3Bkeyword_PH%3D0;place_id=105552.
19 Australian Army Apprentices Association, Home, note 17.
22 Above.
25 Above.
26 Defence Housing Australia, note 23.
29 Australian War Memorial, Enoggera, note 27.
30 The Salvation Army, Gallipoli Barracks Enoggera [Brisbane], note 28.
32 Above.
33 Above.
34 Above.
37 Above.
39 Above.
40 Above.
43 Australian War Memorial, Australian Women’s Army Service (AWAS) and Women’s Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC), viewed 1 August 2014, http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/structure/awas/.
44 Above.
Above.

Army, Women’s Historical Contribution Recognised on Anzac Day, note 42.


Above.

Above.

Department of Defence, Age & Gender, viewed 1 August 2014, http://www.defencejobs.gov.au/recruitmentCentre/canIJoin/ageAndGender/.

Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1950s, [Name redacted].

Email from Department of Defence Organisational Response Unit (ORU) to the Taskforce, 20 October 2014.


Note that many complainants who reported abuse at Puckapunyal alleged that it occurred during Initial Employment Training after they had already completed basic training at ARTC Kapooka. However, these complainants have been included in this section due to their junior rank and the noticeable similarities between these complainants’ accounts and those which occurred at other training institutions.

Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1950s, [Name redacted].

Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1950s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted]. See further, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Private, [Location redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, [Location redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, [Location redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, Kapooka, late 1950s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
See, for example, Male Recruit, Kapooka, late 1950s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female Staff Cadet, RMC, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Staff Cadet, RMC, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1970s to early 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1960s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1950s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Cadet, Puckapunyal Military Base, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1960s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1950s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female Staff Cadet, RMC, [Year redacted], [Name redacted].

Female Staff Cadet, RMC, [Year redacted], [Name redacted].
115 See, for example, Female Staff Cadet, RMC, [Year redacted], [Name redacted]; Female Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1970s to early 1980s, [Name redacted].
116 See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
117 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
118 Female Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1970s to early 1980s, [Name redacted].
119 See, for example, Female Staff Cadet, RMC, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
120 Female Staff Cadet, RMC, [Year redacted], [Name redacted].
121 See, for example, Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
122 Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
123 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].
124 See, for example, Female Staff Cadet, RMC, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
125 Female Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
126 See, for example, Female Private, RMC, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
127 Female Staff Cadet, RMC, [Year redacted], [Name redacted].
128 See, for example, Female Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
129 Female Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
130 See, for example, Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Staff Cadet, RMC, [Year redacted], [Name redacted]; Female Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
131 See, for example, Female Staff Cadet, RMC, [Year redacted], [Name redacted]; Female Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
132 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
133 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
134 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
135 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
136 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
137 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
138 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1960s, [Name redacted].
139 Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
140 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
141 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
142 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
143 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
144 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted] 4; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
145 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
146 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
147 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
148 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
149 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

150 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

151 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

152 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

153 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

154 Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

155 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

156 Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

157 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

158 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

159 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

160 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

161 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

162 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

163 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

164 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

165 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

166 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

167 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

168 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

169 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

170 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

171 Male Staff Cadet, RMC, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

172 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

173 See, for example, Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

174 See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, Puckapunyal Military Area, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

175 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

176 Male Staff Cadet, RMC, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

177 See, for example, Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

178 See, for example, Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

179 Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

180 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

181 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].

182 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

183 Female Private, [Location redacted], late 1970s to early 1980s, [Name redacted].
184 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s to early 1970s, [Name redacted].
185 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
186 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
187 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
188 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
189 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
190 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
191 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
192 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
193 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
194 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
195 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
196 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
197 See, for example, Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
198 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
199 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
200 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
201 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
202 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
203 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
204 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
205 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
206 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
207 See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
208 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
209 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
210 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
211 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
212 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
213 See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
214 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
215 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
216 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
217 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
218 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
219 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
220 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
221 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
222 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
See, for example, Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, Puckapunyal Military Area, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female Recruit, Puckapunyal Military Area, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

See for example: Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Staff Cadet, RMC, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

See for example: Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

See for example: Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

See for example: Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
257 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
258 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
259 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
260 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
261 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
262 See, for example, Male Staff Cadet, RMC, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
263 Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
264 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
265 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
266 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
267 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
268 Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
269 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
270 Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
271 Male Staff Cadet, RMC, late 1950s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1960s, [Name redacted].
272 Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
273 Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
274 See, for example, Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
275 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
276 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
277 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
278 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
279 Male Staff Cadet, RMC, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
280 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
281 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
282 Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
283 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
284 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
285 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
286 Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
287 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
288 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
289 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
290 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
291 Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].
292 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
293 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1950s, [Name redacted].
294 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
295 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
296 See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
297 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
298 Male Recruit, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1950s, [Name redacted].
299 Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
300 Female Private, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
301 Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
302 Male Private, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].
303 See, for example, Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1980s to early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
304 Male Private, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].
305 Male Private, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
306 Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
307 Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
308 Male Private, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
309 See, for example, Female Private, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].
310 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].
311 See, for example, Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
312 Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
313 Male Private, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].
314 See, for example, Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
315 Male Private, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
316 See, for example, Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
317 Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
318 See, for example, Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
319 Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
320 See, for example, Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1980s to early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
321 See, for example, Female Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
322 See, for example, Female Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
323 See, for example, Female Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
324 Male Private, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].
325 See, for example, Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
326 Male Private, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
327 See, for example, Female Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
328 See, for example, Female Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
329 Male Private, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
330 Male Private, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].
See, for example, Female Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Female Private, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], Lavarack Barracks, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], Blamey Barracks Kapooka, [Year redacted], [Name redacted]; Female Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Private, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
Female Private, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Lance Corporal, Lavarack Barracks, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
Female Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Corporal, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Robertson Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 1990s to early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Private, Galipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Corporal, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
Male Lance Corporal, Lavarack Barracks, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
See, for example, Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Private, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 1990s to early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Lance Bombardier, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Lance Corporal, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Sergeant, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Sergeant, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Warrant Officer, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
441 Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
442 Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
443 See, for example, Female Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
444 Female Lieutenant, Gallipoli Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
445 Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Lance Corporal, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
446 Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
447 Male Sergeant, Gallipoli Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
448 Male Apprentice, Lavarack Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Warrant Officer, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
449 Male Lance Corporal, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
450 Male Lance Corporal, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
451 Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
452 See, for example, Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
453 Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
454 Male Lance Corporal, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
455 Male Lance Corporal, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
456 Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
457 Male Warrant Officer, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
458 Male Lance Corporal, Gallipoli Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
459 Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
460 Female Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
461 See, for example, Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
462 Male Corporal, Gallipoli Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Major, Puckapunyal Military Area, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
463 Male Warrant Officer, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
464 Male Lance Corporal, Gallipoli Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
465 Female Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Corporal, Gallipoli Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Lance Corporal, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
466 Male Warrant Officer, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Sergeant, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Lance Corporal, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
467 Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
468 See, for example, Female Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
469 See, for example, Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
470 Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
471 Female Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
472 Female Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Sergeant, Gallipoli Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female Lieutenant, Gallipoli Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Lance Corporal, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Sergeant, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Sergeant, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Department of Defence, Latchford Barracks – Bonegilla, Victoria, note 18.

Australian Army Apprentices Association, Home, note 17.


Parliamentary Hansard, Statement by the Minister: Royal Military College Duntroon, 1969.

See newspaper extracts in Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

For example, Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Army, Army Recruit Training Centre Kapooka, note 9.

Army, Full-Time Soldier Training, note 10.

Army, History, note 11.

See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1950s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1950s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], ARTC Kapooka, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1960s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female Major, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1950s, [Name Redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female Army member, [Locations redacted], late 1980s to late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
18. Complaints of abuse in the Royal Australian Air Force

18.1 Background to the Air Force

(a) Historical background

The Royal Australian Air Force (Air Force) is the air force branch of the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

The Air Force first operated during World War I as the Australian Flying Corps (AFC) which was attached to the larger British Royal Flying Corps. In 1920, the AFC was replaced by the Australian Air Corps, which then became the Royal Australian Air Force in 1921.1

During World War II, Australia had the fourth-largest air force in the world (after the USA, former-USSR and UK) with over 182,000 personnel and 6,200 aircraft in 61 squadrons. Nearly 10,000 Air Force personnel lost their lives in World War II, with over 55 per cent of these deaths occurring in the air war against Germany over Europe.2

Today between 500 and 700 Australian Air Force personnel serve each day in coalition operations, peacekeeping operations, and humanitarian and disaster relief around the world.3 Currently, the two major deployments of the Air Force are Operation SLIPPER, which is Australia’s contribution to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, and Operation RESOLUTE, which aims to protect Australia’s borders and maritime interests.4

(b) Key establishments

(i) Recruit and employment training establishments

The key training establishments for the Air Force are currently located at RAAF Base Wagga in New South Wales and RAAF Base East Sale in Victoria.

Initial training for the Air Force is undertaken at the No 1 Recruit Training Unit (1RTU) which is currently based at RAAF Base Wagga. The primary function of 1RTU is to prepare newly enlisted personnel for military service, comprising training conducted over a period of between 10.6 to 12.6 weeks. Training of female recruits as part of the Women’s Training Unit occurred at RAAF Base Laverton from 1977 until 1981, after which the responsibility of training both male and female recruits was vested in 1RTU at RAAF Base Edinburgh. The 1RTU was based in Edinburgh until 2008 after which it was moved back to RAAF Base Wagga.5

The Apprentice training scheme within the Air Force ran from 1960 to 1992, largely comprising training programs located at RAAF Base Wagga and RAAF Base Laverton.

The RAAF School of Technical Training located at RAAF Base Forest Hill in Wagga Wagga (RAAF Base Wagga) was home of the RAAF Apprentice Scheme, which trained both technical and non-technical trades’ professionals.6 Recruits joined the apprentice program following completion of initial recruit training at 1RTU, and apprentices completed an apprenticeship of between two and a half to three years in duration before being promoted to the rank of Aircraftman/Aircraftwoman and posted to a unit or squadron where they worked in their trade area. Graduates of the RAAF Apprentice Scheme would be selected to provide the main body of senior non-commissioned officers, Warrant and Commissioned Technical Officers in the Air Force.7 In 1985, the RAAF School of Management and Technology Training (RAAFSMTT) was set up at RAAF Base Wagga8 to train instructors, course developers, training managers, training administrators and educational officers,9 and came under the control of the School of Postgraduate Studies, RAAF College, in 1998.

The RAAF School of Radio (RADS) at RAAF Base Laverton operated between 1961 and 1993 and was responsible for telecommunications operation and technician training. Prior to 1975, apprentices undertaking training as part of the Radio Apprentice Scheme spent approximately two of their three years in training studying at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology before arrangements were made for this training to occur on base.10
The Officers’ Training School (OTS) was formed at RAAF Base Rathmines in 1950 and relocated to RAAF Base Point Cook in Victoria in 1961. Between 1981 and 1986, OTS conducted initial officer training for all trainee officers except those at the RAAF Academy. In 1986, OTS closed and its curriculum was subsumed by RAAF College before being re-established as a separate unit in 1998 under RAAF Training Command. In 2008, OTS relocated from RAAF Base Point Cook to its current location at RAAF Base East Sale in Victoria. Also located at RAAF Base Point Cook during this time period was the RAAF School of Languages and No 1 Flying Training School. From 1960 to 1980, students undertaking pilot training (whether direct entry to the Air Force or former Aircraftmen) were posted to the No 1 Flying Training School for six months, followed by nine months at No 2 Flying Training School at RAAF Base Pearce in Western Australia. Initial officer training was undertaken as an integral part of the flying training.

In addition to this, RAAF Base Williamtown, located 30 kilometers north of Newcastle in New South Wales, operates as the nation’s main fighter pilot training base.

(ii) Regular Service

After completing initial recruit and employment training, members of the Air Force undergo specialist training in their chosen field. Currently, members of the Air Force can choose from around 60 different roles. These roles vary for Officers and Aircraftmen/Aircraftwomen and cover employment in areas including aviation, administration and education, technical trades communications and intelligence, engineering and logistics, combat and security, healthcare, chaplaincy and some specialist streams.

Once members have completed their specialist training they will be posted to an Air Force or Defence establishment within Australia or overseas. There are currently 11 major Air Force bases located around Australia, with the largest being RAAF Base Amberley, which is 40 kilometers south-west of Brisbane, and employs over 5000 people.

Members of the Air Force are required to sign up to a minimum period of service which will be determined by the member’s job and method of entry. This starts at a minimum period of two years for officers, whereas Aircraftmen and Aircraftwomen are required to enlist for a period of between one and seven years. After this period members may choose to continue in the service or pursue a career outside of the Air Force. However after leaving the service, Aircraftmen and Aircraftwomen are required to remain members of the Air Force Standby Reserve for a minimum of five years.

(c) Number and diversity of personnel

Today, the Air Force employs about 14 000 men and women, supported by 4000 Air Force Reservists and 800 civilian public servants, and makes up approximately 25 per cent of the ADF Permanent Forces.

Currently women represent almost 18 per cent of Air Force personnel and 79 female Air Force personnel have been deployed on overseas operations.

Prior to January 2013, the roles of Airfield Defence Guard and Ground Defence Officer were prohibited to women. However, combat restrictions were removed, and now women who are currently serving can apply to transfer into these roles, as well as serve in all positions in the Air Force.

With regard to ethnic diversity in the Air Force, 19 per cent of Air Force members originate from 111 countries outside Australia and over five per cent of the Air Force workforce is bilingual.

18.2 Overview of complaints of abuse in the Air Force

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 2224 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse experienced by more than 1650 complainants during their time in Defence. This includes 378 cases of abuse in the Air Force, experienced by more than 300 complainants.
It is important to note that the Taskforce has categorised the abuse experienced by each complainant as forming one or more ‘cases’ of abuse. Many complainants experienced multiple cases of abuse. One case generally relates to abuse experienced at one location (occasionally abuse experienced over a number of locations may be classed as one case of abuse if it is part of an ongoing campaign of abuse). The statistical information provided below is based on the number of cases of abuse in the Air Force. The discussion of abuse throughout this section generally refers to the number of complainants, or individuals, who experienced a particular type or form of abuse during their time in the Air Force.

In this report, the Taskforce provides a separate analysis of the abuse reported to have occurred during initial recruit and employment training to that experienced by members of Defence in regular service. This is because of the very significant number of complaints of abuse that occurred in recruit and employment training establishments, and because the abuse in these establishments raises some specific issues.

The analysis of abuse reported to have occurred during Air Force recruit and employment training programs is based on a close review of complaints received by 101 complainants which raised at least one plausible allegation of abuse that occurred at the following locations: RAAF Base Wagga (41 complainants), RAAF Base Edinburgh (35 complainants), RAAF Base Laverton (14 complainants), RAAF Base Point Cook (five complainants), RAAF Base Williams (five complainants), and a small number of complaints relating to RAAF Base Amberley, RAAF Base Williamtown, and RAAF Base Richmond. A number of complainants experienced abuse at more than one of these locations.

Analysis of the complaints of abuse that occurred while complainants were undertaking initial recruit and employment training in the Air Force reveals a disturbing pattern of abuse, even more concerning given that complainants were vulnerable minors, many of whom were 15 years old at the time of the abuse. Many complainants experienced numerous acts of abuse often occurring within the context of an informal hierarchy in which newer intakes were victimised by those undertaking training from previous, and thereby more ‘senior’, intakes. These complainants were mostly young males who experienced this type of abuse during the 1960s and 1970s, reaching a peak during the 1980s.

Complainants commonly reported specific practices involving physical and sexual abuse in these establishments, including ‘rumbling’ or ‘bed tipping’, ‘scrubbing’, ‘greasing’, ‘firehosing’, and ‘crucifixion’. Other common practices included ‘blanket bashing’, unreasonable tasking, and being forced to participate in a range of humiliating and degrading acts. Of concern is the number of complainants who reported that this abuse was actively encouraged and supported by members of staff as a means of building a stronger, more robust Air Force.

Many female complainants also experienced abuse during initial recruit and employment training, especially during the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. This included particularly high numbers of sexual abuse by peers and members of staff. Complaints of abuse that occurred during Air Force recruit and employment training demonstrate that in recent decades, women have been more likely to experience all types of abuse considered by the Taskforce.

The Taskforce also received complaints of abuse that occurred while individuals were undertaking regular Air Force service. In order to provide a detailed summary of the nature of the abuse in regular service, the Taskforce undertook a close review of the complaints of abuse that occurred at the establishments which had the highest number of complaints (or which for some other reason warranted close review). This involved the close review of complaints received by 129 complainants which raised at least one plausible allegation of abuse that occurred during regular Air Force service at the following locations: RAAF Base Amberley (37 complainants), RAAF Base Richmond (29 complainants), RAAF Base Williamtown (21 complainants), RAAF Base Wagga (14 complainants), RAAF Base Williams (14 complainants), RAAF Base Edinburgh (12 complainants), and RAAF Base Laverton (seven complainants). A number of complainants experienced abuse at more than one of these locations.

The analysis of these complaints revealed some patterns in the abuse experienced by complainants who were in regular service in the Air Force at the time of the abuse. By and large, complaints about harassment and bullying exceeded all other types of abuse in number. Almost all complainants experienced harassment and bullying during regular service in the Air Force, and frequently reported deliberate and malicious attempts by their co-workers and superiors to undermine and threaten their careers in the Air Force. Complainants often experienced harassment and bullying in conjunction with
other types of abuse, particularly physical abuse, typically involving threatening behaviour as a means of intimidation. Many complainants also experienced physical abuse in the form of a denial of medical treatment or being forced to participate in physically strenuous activities while under formal medical restriction.

Complaints of abuse within the Air Force increased considerably during the 1980s, however reduced in number during the 1990s and remained fairly consistent into the 2000s. It should be noted that the size of the Air Force in the 1980s was considerably larger than it is today. Both male and female complainants reported similar types of abuse, with the exception of sexual abuse which was experienced almost entirely by female complainants in more recent decades. Since the 1980s, female complainants experienced high rates of sexual assault and indecent assault carried out by members of superior rank. Female complainants in particular often experienced both harassment and bullying and sexual harassment.

The statistics which appear in the descriptions of abuse below have been drawn from complaints at the locations regarding which the Taskforce received the highest number of complaints. These figures do not represent the total number of complaints received by the Taskforce of abuse within the Air Force. Rather, they are used to represent trends and patterns in the abuse that has occurred over time. It should also be noted that the statistical information cited in this report pertains only to abuse reported to the Taskforce and is not able to be extrapolated to make broader conclusions about the nature and levels of abuse occurring within the Air Force, due to the inherent limitations in the statistics collected. Despite these limitations, the statistics drawn from the complaints of abuse assessed by the Taskforce are useful in understanding and illuminating the prevalence of various types of abuse occurring within the Air Force.

The sections below provide a summary of some of the key features of abuse reported to the Taskforce by complainants who served in the Air Force, including:

- a statistical overview of abuse in the Air Force;
- complaints of abuse in Air Force recruit and employment training establishments;
- complaints of abuse during regular service in the Air Force;
- locational case studies (RAAF Base Wagga and RAAF Base Amberley); and
- individual case studies.

18.3 Statistical overview of complaints of abuse in the Air Force

(a) Number of cases

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 378 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse in the Air Force (relating to more than 300 complainants).

This was the lowest number of cases from any of the services, accounting for 17 per cent of all plausible cases of abuse assessed by the Taskforce. The Air Force was also underrepresented in terms of total number of cases compared to the total number of Air Force personnel serving in Defence. Historically, Air Force personnel have typically comprised around 25 per cent of the ADF Permanent Forces (also see section 15.5(c) above).

(b) Abuse by decade

Complainants to the Taskforce experienced abuse in the Air Force from the 1950s to 2011. The highest number of Air Force cases related to abuse that occurred during the 1980s, with a significant number of cases also involving abuse occurring in the 1990s and between 2000 and 2011. It should be noted that the size of the air Force in the 1980s was considerably larger than it is today. Of all the services, the Air Force had the highest proportion of cases of abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011 (24 per cent of Air Force cases, compared to 21 per cent of Army cases, and 17 per cent of Navy cases).
(c) Abuse by sex of the complainant

Men were the complainants in 237 cases of abuse in the Air Force (63 per cent of Air Force cases), while women were the complainants in 141 cases of abuse in the Air Force (37 per cent of Air Force cases).

Of all the services, the Air Force had the highest overrepresentation of women as complainants. Cases involving the abuse of women accounted for 37 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Air Force, despite the fact that women currently make up less than 18 per cent of all Air Force personnel and historically have comprised even less.23 Women were the complainants in 25 per cent of Army cases and 18 per cent of Navy cases.

Graph 37: Percentage of male and female Air Force personnel (2010-2011) compared to percentage of male and female cases of abuse over whole time period

Levels of abuse of women in the Air Force appear to have been fairly consistent across the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, as shown in the graph below. Abuse of men in the Air Force peaked substantially in the 1980s then fell during the 1990s and 2000s.
(d) Types of abuse

As with all three services, harassment and bullying was the type of abuse most commonly experienced in the Air Force, followed by physical abuse, then sexual abuse, and finally sexual harassment. Of cases relating to abuse that occurred in the Air Force:

- 130 cases involved sexual abuse (34 per cent of Air Force cases);
- 81 cases involved sexual harassment (21 per cent);
- 144 cases involved physical abuse (38 per cent); and
- 253 cases involved harassment and bullying (67 per cent).
A substantial number of Air Force cases involved sexual abuse (130 out of 378 cases). Sexual abuse was slightly more common in Air Force cases than in Army cases, but less common than in Navy cases (34 per cent of Air Force cases, 33 per cent of Army cases, and 44 per cent of Navy cases). A higher percentage of Air Force cases involved sexual harassment than in the Army or Navy (21 per cent of Air Force cases, 15 per cent of Army cases, and 17 per cent of Navy cases). However, a lower percentage of Air Force cases involved physical abuse than those from the Navy or Army (38 per cent of Air Force cases, 49 per cent of Army cases, and 54 per cent of Navy cases). The percentage of Air Force cases that involved harassment and bullying was similar to the other two services, as shown in the graph below.

Graph 40: Types of abuse as a percentage of cases for each service

All types of abuse in the Air Force peaked in the 1980s, as can be seen in the graph below. After this decade, all types of abuse began to fall, with the exception of harassment and bullying which remained prominent, especially as compared to other types of abuse.

Graph 41: Air Force cases by type of abuse by decade
The types of abuse experienced by men and women in the Air Force were different. As in all services, women were more likely than men to have experienced sexual abuse and sexual harassment. Further, the Air Force was the only service where, in total numbers, more women than men experienced sexual abuse. Women were the complainants in 52 per cent of all Air Force cases involving sexual abuse, compared to 39 per cent of cases involving sexual abuse in the Army, and 21 per cent of cases involving sexual abuse in the Navy. As in the other services, men in the Air Force were more likely than women to have experienced physical abuse and harassment and bullying.

In cases of abuse in the Air Force:

- 48 per cent of women experienced sexual abuse (67 cases), compared to 27 per cent of men (63 cases);
- 44 per cent of women experienced sexual harassment (62 cases), compared to eight per cent of men (19 cases);
- 26 per cent of women experienced physical abuse (36 cases), compared to 46 per cent of men (108 cases); and
- 62 per cent of women experienced harassment and bullying (88 cases), compared to 70 per cent of men (165 cases).

18.4 Complaints of abuse in Air Force recruit and employment training establishments

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 378 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse in the Air Force (17 per cent of all cases), experienced by more than 300 complainants.

It is important to note that the Taskforce has categorised the abuse experienced by each complainant as forming one or more ‘cases’ of abuse. Many complainants experienced multiple cases of abuse. One case generally relates to abuse experienced at one location (occasionally abuse experienced over a number of locations may be classed as one case of abuse if it is part of an ongoing campaign of abuse). The discussion of abuse throughout this section generally refers to the number of complainants, or individuals, who experienced a particular type or form of abuse during their time in the Air Force.

As discussed in section 15.1(a) above, in this report, complaints of abuse that occurred during initial recruit and employment training are considered separately to those that occurred during regular service. This is because of the significant number of these complaints and because these complaints raise specific issues.

The Taskforce received a significant number of complaints regarding abuse that occurred while complainants were undertaking initial training upon entry into the Air Force. This abuse occurred across several RAAF bases, which can largely be explained given that the primary Air Force recruit and employment training programs shifted locations throughout the time period considered by the Taskforce. The Taskforce conducted a close review of complaints received by 101 complainants regarding abuse that occurred during initial recruit or employment training in the Air Force at the following locations: RAAF Base Wagga (41 complainants), RAAF Base Edinburgh (35 complainants), RAAF Base Laverton (14 complainants), RAAF Base Point Cook (five complainants), RAAF Base Williams (five complainants), and a small number of complaints relating to RAAF Base Amberley, RAAF Base Williamtown, and RAAF Base Richmond. A number of complainants experienced abuse at more than one location.

The summary below is based on information provided by the 101 complainants who were undertaking initial recruit and employment training at these locations. It is important to note that where figures are given, they only relate to complaints of abuse experienced by people who were undertaking initial training at these locations. These figures do not represent the total number of complaints received by the Taskforce regarding abuse during initial training in the Air Force. Rather, they are used to represent trends and patterns in the abuse that has occurred over time.

Of the 101 complainants who experienced abuse at the above locations, 65 complainants were male and 36 complainants were female. At the time of the abuse, complainants were generally between the ages of 15 and 18, with at least one complainant having experienced abuse as young as 13 years old, and a significant number of complainants who were 15 years old at the time of the abuse (14 complainants).
The highest number of complaints regarding abuse during initial training related to abuse occurring at RAAF Base Wagga from the early 1960s to the late 2000s (41 complainants). Complainants who experienced abuse during their time at RAAF Base Wagga reported that new apprentices were referred to as ‘sprogs’ and ‘considered to be a lower form of life than the second year, or third year apprentices’. One complainant who was at RAAF Base Wagga in the late 1960s told the Taskforce:

Generally speaking, the first six months, where apprentices were developed by ‘Basic Training’ were the most arduous for new apprentices. After six months, we were then allocated into ‘Trade Groups’, and this provided some relief from the harassment; both official and unofficial. After 12 months, we then became second year apprentices with a new intake of ‘sprogs’ below us; and so the cycle continued.

The Taskforce received the second highest number of complaints regarding abuse during initial training at RAAF Base Edinburgh over the early 1960s to the late 2000s (35 complainants). Most of these complaints involved abuse carried out during initial recruit training at the No 1 Recruit Training Unit. Recruits moved through the 10 to 12 week training program fairly quickly and, as such, the informal hierarchies between junior and senior peers evidenced in other training programs in the Air Force were not given the time to develop and did not feature in complaints of abuse at RAAF Base Edinburgh. Abuse at RAAF Base Edinburgh was largely carried out by classmates and members of staff, including particularly high rates of harassment and bullying, physical abuse and sexual abuse that were reported to have occurred during the 1980s.

The Taskforce also received complaints regarding abuse during initial training at RAAF Base Laverton from the 1960s to 1990 (14 complainants). Within the Radio Apprentice Scheme, senior apprentices exercised significant positions of authority. Complainants who experienced abuse during their time as apprentices at RAAF Base Laverton described harassment and intimidation from the immediate senior and second year course participants, and abuse carried out by apprentice non-commissioned officers, including particularly high rates of harassment and bullying, physical abuse and sexual abuse that were reported to have occurred during the 1980s.

The Taskforce also received complaints of abuse that occurred while individuals were undertaking officer training through the Officers’ Training School over the period of the 1950s to the early 2000s. Complainants who experienced abuse during their officer training described abuse carried out by second, third and fourth year senior cadets during their training as a first year officer cadet.

A large number of complainants who experienced abuse in Air Force recruit and employment training establishments told the Taskforce that abuse typically occurred within the context of an informal hierarchy in which newer intakes were victimised by those undertaking training from previous, and thereby more ‘senior’, intakes. These complainants were mostly young males who experienced this type of abuse during the 1960s and 1970s, reaching a peak during the 1980s.

Complainants consistently reported that the abuse which was carried out by senior peers in the context of initiation or hazing of newer intakes took place with the tacit acceptance of the staff members of training establishments, describing it as ‘very common place’, ‘tradition’, the ‘approved culture at the time’, and ‘a culture of sanctioned abuse’. Other complainants reported that the view of instructors was that ‘bastardisation … was a tool they used to break you into an Air Force mold’, and ‘the objects of this character building was to make a unified force’. As one complainant who was at RAAF Base Wagga in the late 1960s told the Taskforce:

[There was a strong emphasis on ‘warrior’ ethos, qualities and characteristics. Thus, it was inevitable that this would manifest itself in a variety of ways in the hundreds of 15 to 18 year old apprentices exposed to this.]

Complainants reported that superiors already knew of and condoned the abusive behaviour as a method intended to ‘toughen up those needing it’ or ‘break people’. Within this culture, it is unsurprising that several complainants reported being targeted for abuse principally on account of being younger in age, or less physically developed than the...
However, the majority of the abuse appears to have been carried out largely indiscriminately for the purpose of reinforcing informal hierarchies. For example, one complainant who was at RAAF Base Laverton in the late 1960s reported that:

Junior course members were always expected to be subordinate to any senior course member. You may be bigger physically – and perhaps able to hold your own with certain members of senior courses, but to take a stand against any senior member meant uncompromising retaliation by a group of members from the senior course.41 In some locations, members of staff were housed in the same accommodation blocks as the newer intakes, but complainants reported that ‘they turned a blind eye to the seniors and it was pretty well open season on us’,43 and that ‘when questioned they told us that this initiation was approved by the Commanding Officer of [the training establishment] and every year goes through it’.44 In some locations, the very people responsible for the care and protection of newer intakes were the same individuals who carried out the abuse against newer intakes. For example, one complainant who was at RAAF Base Wagga in the late 1960s told the Taskforce:

At one stage, a senior apprentice [Flight Sergeant Apprentice], was made a resident in our block, ostensibly to prevent this happening. Unfortunately for us, [the Flight Sergeant Apprentice] seemed to consider us as personal targets for him and his mates.45

Complainants told the Taskforce that it was ‘taboo’ to discuss or complain about the actions of the senior intakes.46 For example, one complainant who was at RAAF Base Wagga in the late 1960s reported:

It is difficult to explain to anyone who was not an apprentice how the culture made you conform. We were all subjected to continuous cycles of intimidation, assaults and bullying. There was also an apprentice code of not dobbing and dobbers were treated very badly. So nothing got reported. A large number of apprentices left the RAAF because they couldn’t put up with this, I now consider them the braver ones.47

A number of complainants also reported experiencing abuse during initial training that occurred in a context outside of the hazing or initiation practices intended to reinforce the informal hierarchy. Complainants reported that particular factors which marked them as ‘different’ within their cohort increased their risk of being targeted for abuse. These differences included whether they were suffering from illness or injury,48 and whether they had made a formal report of abuse to Defence.49 Many of these complainants were female complainants who experienced abuse during the 1980s, 1990s, and in recent years.

The sections below provide a summary of the main types of abuse experienced during initial recruit and employment training at the Air Force locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce.

(a) Sexual abuse in Air Force recruit and employment training establishments

I was suddenly transported into an adult world, where I expected to be treated with respect and dignity, but the opposite became true. … [S]ome of the things that happened to me whilst I was there … [involved] unwelcome and unaccustomed intimacy, that practically made me throw up. … I was offered a voluntary discharge towards the end of the first year and I took it. … I was so traumatised that I cried like a baby on the train, all the way from Wagga Wagga to Sydney.50

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 130 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual abuse within the Air Force (34 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Air Force).

Of the 101 complainants who experienced abuse during initial recruit or employment training in the Air Force at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 50 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual abuse (50 per cent of complaints reviewed). This includes complaints of sexual abuse during initial training from 29 male complainants and 21 female complainants. The alleged abusers in these cases were both other recruits or trainees (35 complainants) and members of staff (15 complainants).

The forms of sexual abuse reported were fairly similar regardless of the gender of complainants, and included sexual assault and acts of indecent assault. In the majority of complaints of sexual abuse, alleged abusers were peers in the same cohort or peers from a more senior intake. Some of the sexual abuse reported by male complainants occurred in the
context of hazing or initiation, often carried out for the purpose of humiliating and degrading newer intakes, or as a way of reinforcing the informal hierarchy between peers in successive cohorts.

In total, cases of sexual abuse in the Air Force reached a peak in the 1980s, then halved in the 1990s and reduced again slightly in the 2000s. It is important to note that there was significant variation in complaints between genders was the time period in which sexual abuse took place. Almost all male complainants who experienced sexual abuse reported that it occurred during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. By contrast, half the number of complaints of sexual abuse reported by female complainants occurred during the 1980s. Incidents of sexual assault that occurred during the 1980s were largely carried out by members of training staff. It is particularly significant that almost all incidents of sexual abuse that occurred after 1990 were experienced by women. In complaints involving sexual abuse that occurred after 1990, most alleged abusers were other peers undertaking training.

The nature of the sexual abuse experienced during Air Force recruit and employment training is discussed below, including sexual assault, indecent assault, as well as other forms of sexual abuse.

(i) Sexual assault

[A male peer] broke into the locked room I was sleeping in and raped me while three friends of his photographed the assault. ... The words that have haunted me [ever since]: “Forget it ever happened... get over it” said by a RAAF policeman.51

Complaints of sexual assault made up the majority of complaints of sexual abuse while complainants were undertaking initial recruit and employment training in the Air Force (21 complainants). Most of these complainants were female (14 complainants). A large number of female complainants experienced serious acts of sexual assault involving non-consensual vaginal and anal penetration, as well as digital penetration carried out by peers and members of staff. Almost half of these reports involved incidents of sexual assault that took place while complainants were undertaking initial recruit training at RAAF Base Edinburgh during the 1980s. The Taskforce also received reports from a number of male complainants who experienced sexual assault carried out by senior peers and members of staff of Air Force recruit and training establishments (seven complainants). These complainants told the Taskforce of incidents of sexual assault involving non-consensual anal penetration by an alleged abuser’s penis, as well as anal penetration with objects. Complainants also reported being forced to give and receive oral sex.

The Taskforce received a number of reports from complainants who were sexually assaulted after social activities or a night out drinking with friends and classmates,52 or while on recreation leave from base.53 In some of these cases, complainants reported having been assaulted before or after falling unconscious from intoxication,54 or assaulted while in a state of sedation after having been deliberately drugged or provided with large quantities of alcohol prior to the abuse.55 One complainant who was at RAAF Base Wagga in the early 1980s told the Taskforce:

I was given two tablets to help me sleep, I didn’t request them but naively took them. I was too trustworthy. I learnt from that day on do not trust anybody. I don’t know what time it was but I awoke in a semi-conscious state and was unable to move my arms or legs, I could barely lift my head and could not speak. (He) was performing oral sex on me and I could do nothing to stop him.56

A number of complainants reported being sexually assaulted by multiple peers during a single incident of sexual assault, often in circumstances in which alleged abusers took turns restraining the complainant. For example, a female complainant told the Taskforce of her experience of abuse in the late 1980s:

[i] went to a party off base ... [i] consumed alcohol. When returning to base two males accompanied me in the taxi, one on each side. Due to my alcohol consumption they assisted me through the guard box and then proceeded to walk me towards the quarters. When getting to the parade ground they laid me on a grassed area under the trees to the left of the parade ground, unzipped my jeans and took down my underwear. They then had intercourse with me. They dressed me, then took me back to my block, even opening the door to let me in. I was not able to resist due to my alcohol consumption or give consent. I did not think that I had consumed more than two to three drinks, but was unable to stand at the end of the night.57
Some complainants also reported being photographed or filmed while naked or engaging in sexual acts, for example one complainant who was sexually assaulted while three of the alleged abuser’s friends photographed the assault.

A number of complainants reported incidents of sexual assault carried out by members of staff of recruit and training establishments (eight complainants). In these circumstances, alleged abusers deliberately used their positions of rank and authority as a means of intimidation or to coerce complainants into performing sexual acts. In many of these cases, complainants were directly threatened against reporting the abuse. For example, a female complainant told the Taskforce of an incident that occurred at RAAF Base Edinburgh in the late 1980s:

When I was living on the base, my [Flight Sergeant] called my block [accommodation] in the middle of the night and told me that my parents had been in a car accident and that I needed to come down and see him. ... When I got to the building there was a man in plain clothing [whom I recognised as a commissioned officer], standing out the front who ushered me inside. The door slammed closed [was locked – as I later found out] and then [the Flight Sergeant] raped me, more than once, and held me against my will for a few hours. I attempted to escape a few times unsuccessfully. I finally escaped after being allowed to go to the toilet. During the time I was being held by this man he continuously threatened my career, my credibility, the way my life would be affected, etc. ... I was so very frightened I actually vomited.

(ii) Indecent assault

The Taskforce received a number of complaints of sexual abuse involving acts of indecent assault while complainants were undertaking initial training in the Air Force (29 complainants). Most of these complainants were male (21 male complainants). Many male complainants experienced acts of indecent assault in the context of hazing or initiation practices carried out by groups of peers from within their intake and more senior intakes (14 complainants). Cases where male complainants reported abuse by an individual alleged abuser typically involved waking up to find an alleged abuser fondling or groping their genitals.

A number of complainants experienced indecent assault in the form of being forcibly masturbated. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce of experiencing multiple indecent assaults at RAAF Base Wagga in the late 1980s:

On multiple occasions [he] would break into my room when I was asleep and terrorise me. The worst occasion was when late one night he broke into my room – put me in a chair held me down stripped off my shorts and then proceeded to use a vacuum to try and masturbate me with it.

Another complainant told the Taskforce of an incident that occurred in the late 1980s:

The abuse took place shortly after I turned 18. ... Being very young and quite new to the effects of alcohol, I became quite intoxicated and went back to my dorm bed to sleep it off. When I awoke several hours later, I was very much feeling the effects but was none the wiser as to what had happened to me while I was passed out. A few days later I began to hear rumours that several of my course mates had photos of me, that they had partially undressed me to expose my penis, and had put me into compromising and sexually embarrassing positions. ... Being very young, and of very small stature, I was told by my [peers] that if I ”dubbed anyone in” I would regret it. ... I recall that the photo shown to me, showed me with my pants and underpants down, one hand placed on or near my penis and an open pornographic magazine was placed into my other hand, the photograph taken gave appearance that I was masturbating. An added, and rather unpleasant result of these photos being circulated, was that ... I was regularly asked or teased with questions about having been caught masturbating.

By contrast, female complainants typically experienced acts of indecent assault carried out by an individual alleged abuser (seven complainants). Female complainants in particular reported having peers or members of staff place their hands on their breasts and bodies, being kissed without their consent, having genitals rubbed against them, and having their hand forced onto an alleged abuser’s erect penis. For example, one complainant reported that in the early 1980s:

I was asleep in my dormitory. There was another girl sleeping opposite me. ... I woke to find a man sitting on my bed. He ran his hands all over me, my breasts, inside my pants, over my stomach. I did not know the man. Men were not supposed to be in the women’s dormitory, and the dormitory was supposed to be in lock down. I was paralysed by fear and could not believe what was happening. There was another man sitting on the bed of the girl sleeping opposite me, and I believe he was touching her in a similar way. Although I was frozen with fright, she screamed and they ran away.
(iii) Other forms of sexual abuse

Some specific practices were reported in complaints of sexual abuse occurring in Air Force recruit and employment training establishments, often in the context of hazing or initiation by groups of senior peers. These behaviours also amount to indecent assault, but have been discussed separately due to the specific characteristics of these practices.

Many male complainants reported having been stripped fully or partially naked, or having their genitalia clean-shaved. The Taskforce heard from a number of complainants who reported being subjected to ‘blackballing’ or greasing – a painful and humiliating practice whereby a person was held down by a group of their peers and partially or fully stripped naked before boot polish, toothpaste or another substance was forcibly smeared on their genitals or anal area, sometimes with a hard brush.

Another complainant, who served at RAAF Base Wagga in the late 1960s, reported a practice ‘well known anecdotally by all apprentices’ as the ‘baby elephant walk’, whereby apprentices were forced to form a single file, ‘stick our thumb up the arse of the person in front and parade around the building [like elephants in a line joining trunk to tail].’

(b) Sexual harassment in Air Force recruit and employment training establishments

In summer, [we] could wear shorts and singlets because of the heat. One of the non-commissioned officers put an upturned hat on my work bench to collect coins from anyone staring at my breasts. … I was put on show and embarrassed, when all I wanted to do was get on with my work. This went on for 12 weeks.

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 81 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual harassment within the Air Force (21 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Air Force).

Of the 101 complainants who experienced abuse during initial recruit or employment training in the Air Force at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 15 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual harassment (15 per cent of complaints reviewed).

Despite the relatively low incidence of sexual harassment complaints to the Taskforce, this type of abuse is likely to have been much more prevalent within the Air Force than is indicated by the statistics for a number of reasons. This is largely because many complaints of sexual abuse may have included behaviour that could also have been categorised as sexual harassment.

The Taskforce received complaints from both men and women who experienced sexual harassment in Air Force recruit and employment training establishments. The types of sexually harassing behaviour reported were similar for both women and men, although the prevalence of incidents of sexual harassment was greater for women (10 female complainants, five male complainants), especially during the 1980s and 1990s.

A number of female complainants reported negative attitudes by male staff and training instructors towards the participation of women in the Air Force. Complainants told the Taskforce of deliberate attempts by supervising staff to prevent women from graduating from their courses, for example a woman who served at RAAF Base Wagga in the late 1970s reported:

_I was warned by some instructors that they’d do their darnedest to make sure that I didn’t graduate from the course, as there was no room for female Armament Fitters in the RAAF._

Some female complainants reported how their ‘sex life was a topic open for discussion’. Other complainants reported having staff members make sexual comments about them in front of others, such as ‘look at the size of her tits’ and ‘I know what she would be good for... a root’, and having degrading and explicit comments made about them in the form of graffiti in public places.

For example, one complainant told the Taskforce of an incident during the early 1980s:

_When I went to go onto parade that morning the female Corporal Service Policewoman that lived in our block approached me and asked if I had seen the library roof. I had not left my room that morning. She explained that there was graffiti on the ceiling [about me] she asked me to accompany her to the parade ground. I left with her and attempted to go on parade – when I saw the graffiti I was extremely distressed and ran back to my room in tears. An attempt had been made to cover some of the graffiti (on the walls) but the words were there for all to see. ... I was questioned by the RAAF Police [from memory all males] the main focus of their questions was what had I done to encourage such an act?_
Other complainants reported being subjected to repeated invitations back to the rooms of training instructors, and attempts by members of staff to forcibly enter their bedrooms. One complainant who was at RAAF Base Wagga in the early 1980s told the Taskforce of the impact of this sexualised environment on her career progression:

During my training I never failed a test. I worked hard and studied. Because of this I was falsely accused of sleeping with instructors by fellow trainees. After that I made sure I didn’t do as well as I could.

The Taskforce heard from a number of male complainants who experienced offensive behaviour in the form of being unwillingly exposed to pornographic material, including being forced by groups of senior peers to view pornographic material in their underwear and subsequently ridiculed, with one male complainant who served at RAAF Base Wagga in the early 1970s describing that “if you got an erection you were a pervert and if you did not you were a poof ter.”

Other complainants reported being forced to observe male staff exposing their genitals. For example, one male complainant reported how a Corporal removed his penis from his pants and invited a number of students to “suck his lonely ball.” A female complainant who served at RAAF Base Point Cook in the early 1990s told the Taskforce:

[T]he drill Sergeant for my course came to the course’s accommodation block with a carton of beer. ... He called my course together into the common room, where he performed several unpleasant or suggestive antics before exposing his genitals to us and thrusting them in various directions. When a female course member expressed disgust, [the Sergeant] responded, “Nothing wrong with that, Miss, it’s just a bit of circumcision.”

[c] Physical abuse in Air Force recruit and employment training establishments

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 144 cases as raising plausible allegations of physical abuse within the Air Force (38 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Air Force).

Of the 101 complainants who experienced abuse during initial recruit and employment training in the Air Force at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 56 complainants reported having been subjected to physical abuse (55 per cent of complaints reviewed). This included 46 male complainants and 10 female complainants. The alleged abusers in these complaints were both other recruits and trainees (46 complainants) and members of staff (15 complainants).

The physical abuse experienced by complainants in recruit and employment training establishments ranged over a period from the 1950s to the early 2000s, however the vast majority of abuse occurred throughout the 1960s, 1970s and reached a peak during the 1980s. During this time period and for the majority of male complainants (35 out of 46 complainants), physical abuse was largely experienced in the context of violent and threatening hazing or initiation practices carried out by multiple alleged abusers, often groups of senior peers, and closely linked to the harassment and bullying that occurred in recruit and employment training establishments.

Female complainants who experienced physical abuse during initial training experienced some similar acts of physical assault as male complainants, though separate to the context of initiation or hazing described by male complainants.

In cases where staff members were responsible for physical abuse at a recruit or employment training establishment, the abuse often occurred in the context of harsh training or disciplinary practices.

The nature of the physical abuse experienced during Air Force recruit and employment training is discussed below. This includes physical assault, threats of violence, and a number of more specific forms of abuse reported by male complainants; physical abuse typically experienced by female complainants; and particular practices of physical abuse carried out by members of staff.
(i) Physical assault

The Taskforce received a significant number of complaints regarding acts of physical assault where the alleged abusers were peers from the same cohort or more senior intakes to the complainant (35 complainants). In most of these cases, complainants described serious acts of physical assault carried out by groups of their peers in the form of hazing or initiation, and harassment and bullying (30 complainants). For example, one complainant who served at RAAF Base Wagga in the late 1960s told the Taskforce:

One night in June, members of 21 Intake had pre-graduation drinks. A bunch of airframe, engine and mechanical transport fitter apprentices (they were all drunk) got our whole intake to line up in three ranks at the front of our barracks. They then proceeded to go along the front row and punch us. I was in the front row and got knocked out, but didn’t see the punch coming. They then pretty well trashed our rooms. None of this was reported. None of us (over 100 of us) fought back. This was the culture.89

Complainants reported being struck with a metal pipe90 or glass bottle,91 ‘lashed’ with knotted towels,92 and having fruit or cartons of milk thrown at them by senior intakes.93 Other complainants reported having a finger slammed with a hammer,94 hot coffee poured onto them,95 being burnt by lit cigarette butts to their arms and face,96 or being made to sit in a double laundry trough containing hot and cold water with legs and feet in one end and the rest of their body in the other end in the freezing cold of winter.97

Some complainants described having their face forced into a used toilet or urinal.98 One complainant who served at RAAF Base Wagga in the early 1970s told the Taskforce that the senior apprentices:

[F]orcefully stood us bare foot in the urinals, threatening to smash our toes if they got outside the urinal. They had a thing where they had a competition to see how many of us they could get in the urinals at the same time. Then they would urinate on us.99

Another complainant who served at RAAF Base Wagga in the late 1960s told the Taskforce of being forced to participate in a ‘piss parade’:

Within a few weeks/months of my arrival (my memory of the dates are quite vague), I, and several of my fellow sprogs were forced to participate in a “piss parade”. This was a form of punishment / humiliation which was well understood anecdotally by all apprentices. I (we) was/were forced from our accommodation blocks into an open area behind the building. This incident occurred at night, and was perpetrated by apprentices more senior to us (I have no recollection of their identity). Under threat of physical violence [and some real physical violence against those reluctant to comply], we were forced to strip naked. We were then lined up in a single line “on parade” and ordered to urinate (“piss”). One of the perpetrators had a medium rubber fire hose which was unrolled from a nearby fire cabinet. Those who were unwilling, or unable to urinate, had the hose forced into their mouths to “help” them to piss. Naturally, all of us [and our clothes] were sprayed with water from the hose, whether we were compliant or not.100

The Taskforce received a number of complaints regarding unreasonable tasking by senior intakes causing serious physical injury. As one complainant described, ‘one of our number reported deep blue bruising to the right shoulder and arm from hefty blows from a number of the senior course members when they didn’t get the answer they wanted’101 Other complainants reported being made to hold a senior apprentice’s book-bag in each hand with arms outstretched during bus journeys and punched in the stomach when their arms would start to droop from the weight.102 One complainant told the Taskforce of an apprentice being forced to swim around a pond with his head under water, and bashed in the head by broken branches held by older apprentices every time he lifted his head above water.103

Some complainants also reported acts of physical assault by a single alleged abuser, often a member of their own cohort who had taken a disliking towards them.104 For example, complainants reported being ‘king hit’,105 punched and thrown into walls repeatedly,106 held against a wall and repeatedly punched in the stomach and under the jaw,107 and punched repeatedly in the chest.108 Other complainants experienced especially violent acts of physical abuse in the context of other types of abuse, including sexual abuse.
(ii) Threats of violence

I recall one instance – I think it was a weekend, where 22 bullet holes appeared in the entrance doors of [an accommodation] hut – I have no idea of who fired the shots but I and others were keeping a very low profile.109

A number of complainants told the Taskforce of experiencing threats of violence and acts of intimidation by their peers and members of more senior intakes. This included being followed by a car driven by another apprentice that nearly ran them over,110 or having a service rifle loaded with blanks held to their temple for 45 minutes.111

The Taskforce also received complaints regarding threats of violence in the context of violent hazing or initiation practices by senior peers. For example, one complainant reported that apprentices from RAAF Base Wagga in the early 1970s:

[W]ould be tied down to their beds in their sleep, then they would be carried on the beds outside and placed on the rail lines nearby. They would leave the bed on the tracks and you wouldn’t know when or if a train was coming.112

Another complainant who served at RAAF Base Laverton in the late 1970s described the impact of witnessing abuse against his peers as a form of threat in itself:

I also suffered abuse in watching the injuries that were perpetrated on the others. I knew ribs were broken, I knew one boy cut his wrists. I can’t go on with the memories now as it is too upsetting. I was harmed by being abused but I was also harmed by being a witness to all of that abuse. The memories of it are still with me, still distressing.113

(iii) Crucifixion or ‘Jesus showers’

The Taskforce received a number of reports of physical constraint in the form of crucifixion or being subjected to a Jesus shower, where an individual was suspended for an extended period of time in a shower cubicle by a broom handle threaded through the sleeves of their uniform. Following this, water would be turned on and, as one complainant told the Taskforce, ‘everyone abuses you in whichever manner they see fit’.114 This often involved being urinated on,115 hosed with a fire hose,116 or covered in cleaning fluids and powders.117

For example, one complainant who served at RAAF Base Wagga in the early 1980s described his experience as follows:

While they held me down, one of them fed a broom stick through the sleeves and across the back of my overalls, and then they carried me to the shower block and into a cubicle, hung me up so my feet were off the ground, and then turned on the hot water. I was unable at first to escape the shower cubicle due to being suspended in the air. I finally managed to break the broom stick by bouncing up and down and crawling out of the cubicle. During this incident, the members responsible made no attempt to help me and/or to turn the hot water off despite my screams of pain and telling them it was hot and stood there laughing at my predicament.

I suffered scalding to my body and pain for several days after, however I did not report it to the doctor or superior, because I knew if I did I would have to explain how it happened, and I was fearful of the possible ridicule and consequences of that, and I did not feel that I would receive any support in any event, given the Warrant Officer in charge was privy to what was happening yet did nothing to prevent it.118

(iv) Rumbling or bed tipping

A common form of physical abuse carried out by senior intakes during hazing or initiation practices was rumbling or bed tipping, where an individual would be thrown out of their bed in the middle of the night when their bed was rolled upside down or up-ended by another peer. This practice was reported to have occurred at RAAF Base Wagga between the 1960s and 1980s.

Complainants told the Taskforce that rumbling would take place several times each week. As one complainant reported, ‘this event could occur any time night or day, and may take the form of a localised / targeted attack, or as happened more often, complete “floors” or building would be targeted’.119 A complainant who served at RAAF Base Wagga in the late 1960s described the experience as follows:
Imagine, if you would, lying in bed sleeping, only to have the room door flung open by intruders who rushed to your bed, and grasped it by the side of the bed frame. The perpetrator would then apply maximum upwards / rotational force completely inverting your bed in a fraction of a second. Imagine feeling yourself being bounced of the wall / partition, before smashing face down on the hard floor with your bedding, mattress and steel frame resting on your back. This was accompanied by shouting from the perpetrators, and the metallic sound of the steel bed head and end crashing down on top of the wreck above you. The perpetrators then sometimes jumped on to the top of the wrecked bed, further grinding you into the floor.120

A number of complainants told the Taskforce of leaving the accommodation block and sleeping outside as a means of escaping the abuse.121 For example, another complainant who served at RAAF Base Wagga in the late 1960s described:

On other occasions we also slept out on the ovals or in the bush rather than in our rooms so we didn’t get assaulted by the seniors. This included some really severe winter nights in Wagga. Often we would rumble our own beds and sleep on the floor so we wouldn’t get tipped over by the seniors during the night. This worked sometimes however most times they would get you to make your bed, then get in, so they could tip it over again.122

[v] Blanket bashing

Other complainants experienced physical abuse in the form of blanket bashing, where an individual or group of alleged abusers would hold them down using blankets and physically attack them,123 or having had a blanket thrown over them when asleep and ‘quite simply bashed’ in bed.124 Some complainants reported being assaulted in bed in the form of having socks filled with bars of soap swung at them while sleeping,125 or hit with telephone books while a blanket was put over their head.126

One complainant who served at RAAF Base Wagga in the early 1970s told the Taskforce:

It happened many, many times. I remember these nights vividly to be so violent, so scary, and so traumatising but I can also still feel the “helplessness” of being alone with the inability to defend myself after being completely startled by being bashed awake from sleep with so many men wanting their chance at bashing me.127

[vi] ‘Grot baths’ or ‘chemical baths’

Some complainants told the Taskforce of being subjected to a scrubbing in the form of grot baths or chemical baths, which involved being forced into a bath filled with a mixture of toxic cleaning chemicals and then scrubbed with hard-bristled brooms, scrubbing brushes, or abrasive cleaning products by a group of larger or stronger boys.128 Complainants described baths full of different, readily available chemicals including Brasso, cleaning fluid, floor polish and antiseptics,129 and one complainant who reported being urinated on before being covered in other chemicals.130 The harshness of the chemicals in addition to the violent nature of the scrubbing often resulted in a person’s skin peeling off.131

A complainant who served at RAAF Base Edinburgh in the late 1960s told the Taskforce how these practices were often encouraged by members of staff:

I witnessed a Corporal (instructor) advise a group that a member [smelled]; that night they grabbed him and scrubbed him with a scrubbing brush and a broom; he was screaming throughout this ordeal.132

[vii] Firehosing or ‘sprog washing’

A common form of physical abuse carried out by peers and senior peers in the Air Force was known as firehosing or sprog washing, which involved an individual’s overall legs being forced over a fire hydrant outlet and then turning the water on at high pressure. At the same time, the other arm and leg holes of their uniform were secured with masking tape (or similar), causing large amounts of water to build up in their uniform.

For example, one complainant who served at RAAF Base Wagga in the early 1980s told the Taskforce:

On the day of a member’s birthday, other serving members would restrain the birthday person and their overalls would be filled with substances such as grease, [heavy duty hand cleanser], and kitty litter, then their overalls were taped up around the neck, both arms and one leg. The other leg would be left free from tape and then forced over a fire hydrant outlet, then taped to it, and then the fire hydrant turned on. This resulted in a huge volume of water filling the victim’s overalls until they burst at the seams and/or zipper. These incidents occurred even during the winter months with no regard to the ambient temperature or water temperature.133
(viii) Physical abuse of women during initial training

The Taskforce received a number of complaints involving physical abuse experienced by women during initial recruit and employment training [10 complainants]. Female complainants reported being suspended off a second story balcony from their uniform,134 dragged up a staircase by their hair and kicked,135 or being denied medical assistance by members of staff in circumstances causing further injury.136 Other complainants reported being trapped in a metal cupboard or trapped inside an aircraft bin.137 For example, one complainant reported that in the early 1980s:

During the first weekend [on the course], I went to [the club] on base for a drink. I was physically assaulted by [an Aircraftwoman] who slapped me in the face and punched me in the stomach two or three times. ... [A Leading Aircraftman] witnessed it and encouraged me not to report it as he said that both [the Aircraftwoman] and myself would get into trouble. This was an issue as the rest of the course cheered her on and I felt that if I reported her she and the others would make more trouble for me.138

One complainant told the Taskforce of a particularly violent incident in the late 1980s during which she was strangled by a member of staff until she lost consciousness:

[We] had all been taken to the RSL Club for [drinks]. Once at the club we sat around tables in groups. [The Corporal] made me go over to the table where the instructors were sitting. The instructors were a group of [other Corporals] including [the Corporal] and a few of [my peers]. When I arrived at the instructors table, I was positioned in the middle of the group with all the instructors standing around me. [The Corporal] then placed his hands around my neck and proceeded to strangle me. I am not aware of what happened next because I fell unconscious. I woke up at the base hospital and had severe bruising and discolouration around my neck for several weeks afterwards.139

(ix) Physical abuse by members of staff

A number of complainants reported physical abuse by members of staff, including being violently pushed against and held up against walls,140 and forcefully struck in the face.141 For example, one complainant who served at RAAF Base Edinburgh in the late 1980s told the Taskforce:

[The Flight Sergeant] got extremely frustrated that I could not get the breech of the rifle in the slide properly and physically assaulted me. This was the first time I had ever used a rifle and was learning how to do so. When I was not able to get the breech in, the Flight Sergeant approached me, grabbed my weapon and hit me on the side of my head with the butt of rifle. He then grabbed the dog tags around my neck and said words to the effect of “see these fucking two dog tags, one is for you to wear and the other one is used to send to your mother after you have been killed, you are fucking useless”.142

(d) Harassment and bullying in Air Force recruit and employment training establishments

One of our course members was so homesick and “scared” in the early weeks of joining the Squadron, that he tried to escape ... by climbing over the fence away from the base main entrance. He was caught crying on the fence with his bags on the ground.143

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 253 cases as raising plausible allegations of harassment and bullying within the Air Force (67 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Air Force).

Of the 101 complainants who experienced abuse during initial recruit or employment training in the Air Force at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 66 complainants reported having been subjected to harassment and bullying (65 per cent of complaints reviewed). The alleged abusers in these complaints were both other recruits and trainees (55 complainants) and members of staff (22 complainants).

The harassment and bullying experienced in recruit and employment training establishments occurred over a period from the 1950s to the early 2000s. Of the 55 complainants who reported abuse carried out by fellow recruits and trainees, the majority were young males who experienced abuse during the 1960s and 1970s, reaching a peak during the 1980s. Of these 55 complainants, 27 complainants experienced abuse at RAAF Base Wagga.

Much of the abuse experienced during initial recruit and employment training occurred within a context of an informal hierarchy in which newer intakes were victimised by those undertaking training from more senior intakes. Consequently,
harassment and bullying is closely linked to the sexual abuse and physical abuse experienced by complainants in recruit and employment training establishments.

Most of the harassment and bullying experienced by male complainants during initial recruit and employment training was carried out by other recruits or trainees in earlier decades. However, a number of female complainants also reported harassment and bullying during the 1970s and 1980s, and significantly, harassment and bullying was experienced almost exclusively by female complainants during the 1990s. The nature of the harassment and bullying experienced by female complainants was different to that of men, often carried out by their peers for personal reasons.

The nature of the harassment and bullying experienced during Air Force recruit and employment training is discussed below. This includes forms of harassment and bullying reported by male complainants such as unreasonable tasks and demands, humiliating and degrading acts, and interference with personal property; harassment and bullying typically experienced by female complainants; and harassment and bullying carried out by members of staff.

(i) Unreasonable tasks and demands

Within the informal hierarchies which operated in recruit and employment training establishments, more senior recruits and trainees assumed the right to claim privileges over the newer intakes, and enforced this by way of intimidation, threats and physical violence. Complainants reported being made to give way to senior peers in the meal queue, provide senior apprentices with cigarettes, provide money for them to buy alcohol, or being sent to the canteen to purchase ‘whatever the senior apprentice required’. One complainant had a group of senior apprentices shout simultaneous and conflicting orders at him while he was obliged to carry them out, and another complainant who served at RAAF Base Laverton in the late 1970s described:

We were forced to do tasks for the senior apprentices under threats of physical violence, all being regular occurrences, e.g. made to do many trips to the canteen to purchase silly things, e.g. a box of matches and bring them back one at a time, made to supply cigarettes to senior apprentices and to change brands of cigarettes.

Complainants reported being made to complete errands and menial tasks for senior apprentices, or volunteer for mess duties in their place. One complainant referred to this as ‘slave treatment’. The Taskforce heard from a number of complainants that these kinds of practices often occurred on the nights during which individuals were expected to clean their rooms in preparation for the weekly morning inspection carried out by supervising staff. One complainant told the Taskforce that ‘Monday night was known as “Panic Night” in the Apprentice Scheme. Second year and senior apprentices considered the sprogs as a ready source of labour to perform their bidding. This obviously included forcing sprogs to do the more menial tasks available.’ For example, one complainant reported being made to scrub linoleum floors by hand and foot for the senior apprentices ‘till my bare hands and feet were red raw’. Another complainant who served at RAAF Base Wagga in the late 1960s described:

I recall being forced to polish the floors in corridors of the seniors huts by conventional and unconventional means. The unconventional method was being forced to take a running jump and land on your stomach and see how far you could slide – polishing the floor with the front of your overalls.

Another complainant who served at RAAF Base Wagga in the late 1960s described how apprentices would be coerced into performing unreasonable tasks through serious physical violence:

I was grasped by each arm, and literally dragged across the ground towards the senior block. I displayed passive resistance by leaning back and digging the heels of my leather boots into the dirt surface. They overcame this resistance, physically dragging [me] by each arm, with my heels digging furrows in the ground, as if I was some “humanoid” plough. A cement pathway ran perpendicular to our line of travel. When the heels of my boots contacted the path, my body was catapulted face down onto the dirt. I was dragged face down until we reached the second year /senior accommodation block. I was the dragged face down across the foyer to the stairs. I was literally kicked up the stairs to the next level. I was then hurled into a room containing four second year apprentices. These apprentices forced me to “spit shine” their boots, and then gathered boots from other apprentices. I was forced to remain in that room for several hours “spit polishing” boots. I recall spit polishing 23 pairs of boots that night.
(ii) Humiliating and degrading acts

In addition to performing unreasonable tasks and acceding to the demands of senior peers, a number of complainants reported being forced under threat of violence to perform a range of degrading acts and behaviours designed to humiliate or simply for the entertainment of senior peers. As one complainant told the Taskforce, ‘anything they could think of to belittle us was fair game’. Complainants reported being forced under threat of violence to perform a range of degrading acts and behaviours designed to humiliate or simply for the entertainment of senior peers. As one complainant told the Taskforce, ‘anything they could think of to belittle us was fair game’.157

For example, complainants told the Taskforce of being made to lick the inside of a toilet bowl. One complainant who served at RAAF Base Wagga in the late 1960s told the Taskforce:

With other junior apprentices I was also forced to push a coin with my nose all of the way along the hallway floor in the barracks while getting my backside kicked. Then at the end of the hallway I had to push it up the stairs to the next level and to keep going. This was a race that the seniors placed bets on.160

Other complainants reported being dragged outside and made to perform ‘rain dances’ and assaulted ‘for not dancing hard enough’, required to stand to attention in front of the heater fans in the drying room until near passing out, or forced to piggyback a senior apprentice around the compound.163

(iii) Interference with personal property

Unknown persons attempted to enter our room on several occasions. After being unsuccessful, they used a medium sized rubber fire hose to smash the glass skylight above our door. The hose was pushed through the hole and sprayed around the room.164

A number of complainants experienced harassment and bullying in the form of interference with their personal property, including having their belongings and personal items stolen or their personal equipment damaged or destroyed. Complainants reported that their rooms would be deliberately ransacked by groups of senior peers, often only one hour prior to the formal weekly inspection. Complainants reported having their beds dismantled and the contents of their rooms repeatedly thrown out the window onto the ground outside, or having a fire hose pushed into their room and sprayed around the room.168

For example, a complainant who served at RAAF Base Wagga in the early 1970s told the Taskforce:

They would also come into the dorm with the fire hose and wet me, along with all bedding, uniforms and belongings. Then they would throw it all out the window. We would be stuck then with wet beds, sheets and clothes in the cold, and have to get everything in order again by morning parade.169

(iv) Harassment and bullying of women during initial training

A number of female complainants experienced harassment and bullying during initial recruit and employment training in the Air Force. Though several female complainants reported harassment and bullying during the 1970s and 1980s, most of the harassment and bullying experienced by women in the Air Force occurred during the 1990s.

The nature of the harassment and bullying experienced by female complainants was different to that of men, insofar as it was not carried out in the context of the informal hierarchy within training establishments described by male complainants. Rather, a number of female complainants told the Taskforce of being harassed and bullied by groups of their peers after reporting abuse, or due to being disliked by peers and members of their cohort.

Complainants reported being spat on, having rubbish emptied outside their room, being verbally abused, and socially ostracised. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that in the early 1990s:

During the last weekend of recruit training, someone entered my room and threw all my possessions out of the fire escape. Members of my course laughed about it and everyone denied seeing anyone enter my room. No one helped me retrieve my possessions. Even the bed frame was pulled apart. This behaviour was also in the same period as the last five days of my recruit course. At this time no one on my course would speak to me for any reason. ... I was not invited to any outings and ... I was repeatedly told that they wished I had failed recruits and that no one wanted me in the course.
Harassment and bullying by members of staff

The Taskforce received reports from male and female complainants who experienced abuse carried out by members of staff and training instructors (22 complainants). Complainants reported that supervising staff would take steps to actively prevent them from passing necessary exams, and told the Taskforce of being ridiculed by instructors after failing exams. Other complainants reported direct threats against their career progression or being threatened with stalled career advancement.

For example, one complainant described her experience in the early 1980s as follows:

The Corporal seemed not to like my name, so one day he decided to make an example of me. ... It snowballed into constant bullying and degradation. [The Corporal] made me stand on the parade ground in the hot sun until I fainted, while everyone else sat in the shade. He would make me do push ups in rain soaked puddles so I would have to go and clean my uniform. He would verbally abuse me most days and punish me for the smallest things, like not having a crease in my pants. Even though I was doing well with my training and exams, he would put me down, taking away any confidence I had. He would threaten to throw me in jail if I went to speak up about something. ... One of the most upsetting things he would do was, at every room inspection, and in front of the other girls, he would thoroughly trash my area of the room. He would throw my clothes, shoes and toiletries out of the wardrobe and toss them all over the bed and floor. This included my private things, which was very embarrassing, as it included sanitary napkins and tampons. These would be strewn everywhere and he would just laugh and tell me to pick it up and clean my room. He did this on a weekly basis and thought it was hilarious.

Complaints of abuse during regular service in the Air Force

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 378 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse within the Air Force (17 per cent of all cases), experienced by more than 300 complainants. Many of these cases involved abuse experienced by complainants during regular service in the Air Force, after having completed initial recruit and employment training and while employed in positions on base or on deployment.

It is important to note that the Taskforce has categorised the abuse experienced by each complainant as forming one or more ‘cases’ of abuse. Many complainants experienced multiple cases of abuse. One case generally relates to abuse experienced at one location (occasionally abuse experienced over a number of locations may be classed as one case of abuse if it is part of an ongoing campaign of abuse). The discussion of abuse throughout this section generally refers to the number of complainants, or individuals, who experienced a particular type or form of abuse during their time in the Air Force.

The summary below is based on information provided by the 129 complainants who were undertaking regular Air Force service at these locations. It is important to note that where figures are given, they only relate to complaints of abuse experienced by people during regular Air Force service at these locations. These figures do not represent the total number of complaints received by the Taskforce regarding abuse that occurred during regular Air Force service. Rather, they are used to represent trends and patterns in the abuse that has occurred over time.

Complaints of abuse within the Air Force increased considerably during the 1980s, however reduced in number during the 1990s and remained fairly consistent into the 2000s. It should be noted that the size of the Air Force in the 1980s was considerably larger than it is today. Male and female complainants experienced similar types and forms of abuse, with the exception of sexual abuse which was reported as having been experienced almost entirely by female complainants throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Complaints about harassment and bullying exceeded all other types of abuse in number.
The Taskforce received a large number of complaints about abuse that occurred within a context of intimidation and victimisation by colleagues and supervisors, during which a range of abusive behaviours were carried out in tandem. A large number of complainants experienced harassment and bullying in conjunction with other types of abuse, particularly physical abuse and sexual abuse. Female complainants in particular often experienced both harassment and bullying and sexual harassment.

The sections below provide a summary of the main types of abuse experienced during regular service at the Air Force locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce.

[a] Sexual abuse during regular service in the Air Force

I stood under the shower what seems like forever trying what I thought to wash away what happened to me. I went back to my bed shaking head spinning petrified feeling totally dirty, you have no idea what it is like losing part of your body, part of your life, you can’t know, no one can, not wanting to live. I could not and cannot put what I felt and happened to me into more words sorry. It hurts, hurts so much anger lots of anger, so much, so much.181

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 130 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual abuse within the Air Force (34 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Air Force).

Of the 129 complainants who experienced abuse during regular Air Force service at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 38 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual abuse (29 per cent of complaints reviewed). This included 11 male complainants and 27 female complainants.

The Taskforce received complaints of sexual abuse that occurred between the 1960s and 2011. Though there were few complaints of sexual abuse during the 1960s, cases of sexual abuse in the Air Force reached a peak in the 1980s, then halved in the 1990s and reduced again slightly in the 2000s. Though more male complainants reported experiencing sexual abuse during the 1970s and 1980s, after 1990, complaints about sexual abuse were made almost entirely by female complainants.

The nature of the sexual abuse experienced by complainants during regular service in the Air Force is discussed below, including sexual assault, indecent assault, as well as other forms of sexual abuse.

(i) Sexual assault

The Taskforce received a number of complaints involving sexual assault at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce (14 complainants). This included incidents of anal or vaginal penetration, as well as digital penetration and forced oral sex. It appears that male complainants were more likely to experience sexual assault between the 1970s and 1980s. By contrast, more recent incidents of sexual assault during the 1990s and 2000s were experienced predominantly by female complainants.

Almost all incidents of sexual assault reported to the Taskforce were carried out by members of superior rank to the complainant, in circumstances in which alleged abusers deliberately used their positions of rank and authority as a means of intimidation and to coerce complainants into performing sexual acts.

Most complainants reported sexual assault carried out by an individual alleged abuser, including some complainants who were subjected to multiple incidents of sexual assault by the same alleged abuser over a period of time.182 However, some complainants reported being subjected to sexual assault by multiple alleged abusers. One complainant told the Taskforce of her experience during a ‘pack rape’ in the early 1980s:

I was dragged by my [colleagues] [one guy on each arm and one guy on each leg] out the back of the Armament Section towards the ablution block. I recall kicking and screaming in a state of disbelief, helplessness and absolute horror, as my clothes were torn from me. I felt betrayed and violated. … Though there were quite a few of my non-commissioned officer superiors present, both during and after this incident, none offered me assistance of any kind.183
The Taskforce heard from a number of complainants who described being sexually assaulted while intoxicated or severely affected by alcohol, often after social functions including informal gatherings as well as formal celebratory dinners in the context of their work. Many complainants reported falling unconscious after consuming large amounts of alcohol and waking up to find that they had been stripped naked and were being anally or orally penetrated. For example, a complainant who served at RAAF Base Laverton in the early 1970s described how:

I was asked by a group of airmen who were not known to me, to have a few drinks and to play cards. ... [He] kept pouring more drinks for me to drink. I did not recall passing out from drinking too much alcohol but, I recall what happened when I started to awaken. I was awoken in another person’s very dark room by feeling pain and wet and someone was grabbing me on my genitals and near my rectum. ... Someone also put their hands over my mouth and I struggled trying to beg them to stop but, they persisted and after the assault ended, someone else left the room and, [he] told them I was too drunk - not to worry - and, he would put me back in my own room which he then did and, he told me to keep my mouth shut or worse things would continue to happen to me.

A number of complainants reported being subjected to sexual assaults that were accompanied by threats or particularly violent acts of physical abuse. Complainants described being threatened with a pistol, punched in the face after resisting sexual advances, being physically restrained by a number of people and thereby unable to escape, or having hands and objects placed over their mouths so they were unable to call for help. For example, a complainant who served in the Air Force in the early 1970s told the Taskforce:

Two of them bent me over the shower bench, one with his hand over my mouth or something, while the third person started pulling my shorts off and fucking well, Oh God no, raped me. It was so bloody extremely terrible frightening, excruciating pain, anxious the pain went on, on, on and on. I tried to struggle and scream... stop, stop... please but nothing came out, they kept saying dog, dog. I must have passed out finally from terrible pain, anxiety, scared and everything because when I came around as such I was crying on the shower floor. I looked up dazed and saw the three personnel were standing around me one with a pistol in his hand and kept saying don’t scream or yell dog or say to anyone anything about what you seen or happened to you, if you do dog it will mean more, this time your life. So say nothing.

Another complainant told the Taskforce of an incident that occurred in the early 1980s:

Complainants described being ridiculed, humiliated and subjected to unfair gossip following an incident of sexual assault. This included being called a ‘slut’, being whistled at and propositioned during the course of their work, or having alleged abusers brag about the sexual assault to other personnel on base.

(ii) Indecent assault

He grabbed me, pushed me up against the wall, and shoved his hand up my shirt and molested my breasts. He pushed his crutch against mine and I felt his erection. He tried to touch my groin but I managed to push him away and told him to leave me alone or I would scream.
Of the 38 complainants who experienced sexual abuse during regular Air Force service at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 24 complainants reported incidents of indecent assault. The majority of these complainants were women (19 complainants). The Taskforce received complaints of indecent assault that occurred between the late 1960s and into the late 2000s, with some complainants having been as young as 18 or 19 years old at the time of the abuse. Most acts of indecent assault were carried out by service personnel of senior rank to the complainants at the time of the abuse.

Male complainants told the Taskforce of having their genitals fondled or groped, being stripped naked and having grease applied to their genitals, and having a penis placed on their shoulder while working. Female complainants typically reported being groped and inappropriately touched on the breasts, bottom and genitals in the workplace and on locations around base. Other female complainants told the Taskforce of having male colleagues thrust and rub their penises against them, and being kissed without their consent. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce of a male supervisor who ‘always kissed the female staff in the mornings’. Another complainant described an incident where ‘[an Aircraftman] smeared me with black graphite grease [from the beryllium wing pin] so he could touch my breasts’.

Another complainant reported being subjected to a number of forms of sexual abuse including indecent assault in the early 1980s:

> There were approximately three males and myself in the van at any given time. … [T]he van would be driven into the middle of the grassed area next to the landing strip and we would wait there until we received instructions from the tower. … During these waiting times, I was exposed to indecent behaviour as the guys would read porn magazines and jerk off. … I was propositioned every day and witnessed indecent acts including masturbation and fellatio as the guys dared each other to give head. And on one occasion [a Leading Aircraftman] shot his load on the leg of my overalls which really freaked me out and caused a physical confrontation in the back of the van. … On another occasion I was grabbed once by [a Leading Aircraftman] to ‘blow him’. … I lived in fear every day on this job because it was so disgusting and unpredictable.

[iii] Other forms of sexual abuse

Complainants who experienced sexual abuse during the course of regular service in the Air Force reported a number of other types of sexual abuse. This included being forced to witness sexual acts and having colleagues expose their genitals. For example, one complaint told the Taskforce that in the late 1980s:

> On a bus I was seated alone, when a [non-commissioned officer] came and sat next to me and whispered that he had been bet by the others that I would not sit and watch him while he masturbated. He had his hands down his pants readying himself for the act. I refused and he put his hand on me to prevent me from leaving stating he had $100 on this and I was to stay put.

Another female complainant told the Taskforce of an incident that occurred in the early 1980s:

> At this time women weren’t allowed to walk around the base. It was a requirement that they be in a vehicle with RAAF Police. I was in the car with [the Corporal]. … Whilst driving [he] began talking to me about the type of pornography he liked to watch and told me that his wife won’t do the things he wanted her to. … He started asking me if I would do certain things to him. … I was frightened but managed to say no. He got out of the car with the headlights still on and walked around the front of it. He then began masturbating over the bonnet of the car. After about three to four minutes he stopped and got back in the car. I think he said words to the effect of ‘that’s better’ or something that gave me the impression that he had ejaculated.

One male complainant described being made to view pornographic images and was requested to take naked photographs by a more senior ranked member of the Air Force in the early 1980s:

> He showed me a number of albums containing photographs he had taken and developed. One of the albums had graphic photos of him naked in the bush in states of semi or full erection. … He suggested he take some pictures of me but I didn’t want to but he persisted. I was made to wear a g-string and he took some pictures of me, enticing me to play with myself but I refused. He asked me to remove my g-string but I again refused making some bullshit excuse of being shy. He then suggested we swap and I take pictures of him. I took a number of photos of him semi naked, naked and with him playing with himself.
A number of female complainants reported attempts made by male colleagues to witness them in a state of partial or complete nudity. This included attempts to unzip their overalls, and one complainant who described an incident during which a Leading Aircraftman held me down and cut the bikini straps of my underpants through the side openings of my overalls. One complainant reported finding that a video camera had been installed in the change room they used to get changed into their uniform before shifts. Another complainant told the Taskforce that:

In the female change rooms, a hole was drilled into the wall so as to allow the male cooks and stewards to watch the female members undress. We were unaware of this for some time.

(b) Sexual harassment during regular service in the Air Force

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 81 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual harassment within the Air Force (21 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Air Force).

Of the 129 complainants who experienced abuse during regular Air Force service at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 33 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual harassment (26 per cent of complaints reviewed). This included 28 female complainants and five male complainants.

Despite the relatively low incidence of sexual harassment complaints to the Taskforce, this type of abuse is likely to have been much more prevalent within the Air Force than is indicated by the statistics for a number of reasons. This is largely because many complaints of sexual abuse may have included behaviour that could also have been categorised as sexual harassment.

Complainants experienced sexual harassment between the late 1960s and late 2000s. Complaints of sexual harassment increased over time, with incidents of sexual harassment experienced predominantly by women after 1980. The nature and extent of the sexual harassment experienced by female complainants has remained constant since this time. For most complainants, their experiences of sexual harassment occurred in tandem with other types of abuse, particularly incidents of sexual abuse (20 complainants).

Complainants reported experiencing a range of sexually harassing behaviour. This included being propositioned and having colleagues making ‘passes’ at them. For example, one complainant who served at RAAF Base Laverton in the early 1990s reported that a Squadron Leader would threaten to have her charged with an offence if she did not dance with him or let him kiss her. Complainants also reported repeated unwanted invitations to perform sexual acts. This included repeatedly asking to spend the night in a complainant’s room, and sexual intimidation including having colleagues prowling outside their residence and tapping on their bedroom windows when the lights were out.

One complainant told the Taskforce that in the early 1990s:

[I] had to move rooms at least three times due to men knocking on my door at night, asking for sex. I didn’t see who they were as I was too afraid to open my door. During one of these incidents, I awoke to find that someone had sprayed tomato sauce on the board outside my door. There were a number of comments written, including “filthy whore” and “slut.”

Complainants told the Taskforce of being called offensive and derogatory names, including ‘fag’, ‘slut’, ‘mattress backs’, ‘selfish bitch’ and ‘fucking bitch’. Other complainants reported offensive behaviour in the form of being exposed to pornographic material and images displayed around the workplace, and being made to witness supervisors and other male colleagues parading naked in the workplace.

Many complainants told the Taskforce of being subjected to inappropriate sexual jokes, rumours and gossip about their sexuality or sexual preferences, and invasive questions about their sexual activity such as whether they were ‘getting any’. For example, one complainant who served in the Air Force during the early 1980s described:

Throughout my service time I was subjected to weekly “homosexual vilification” and harassment by service police. ... The vilification escalated to a point that I was being hauled in every week for ‘questioning’. These were highly traumatic and humiliating experiences where I was asked if I had been “licking any nice pussy lately” or told that I just needed some “hot cop meat” and that would change things. I was traumatised by this.
Some female complainants reported feeling uncomfortable and degraded by being forced to share male shower and toilet facilities, which they described as having no doors. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that in the early 1980s:

I asked [the Warrant Officer] about what toilet and change room I should use when I started there next week. He raised his voice and said “You’re one of the boys now Leading Aircraftwoman, you’ll use the boys toilet”. … While at [this Squadron] I never showered at work. I went home dirty and greasy, as the showers and change room were in an open area. Only three of the toilets had doors. I was forced to use the men’s toilets for two and a half years. … All of the air crew knew of my predicament, but I had no options and no power.

A number of female complainants told the Taskforce of a hostile and negative attitude towards women in the Air Force, and derogatory comments specifically targeting their gender. This included being told ‘there is no place for women in the military’, that they were ‘not wanted’, and that females were ‘only trouble’. One complainant who served in the Air Force in the early 1980s reported how this attitude impacted on her career progression:

With my first Annual Evaluation Report … I received only half the marks I had received the previous year at Amberley. I was told “I didn’t need to be promoted, as I wasn’t supporting a family like the males in my section”. I was also told “it would be a waste, as I would only get married and get out of the RAAF anyway”.

Complainants described how a negative attitude towards female colleagues often manifested itself in the form of practical jokes. For example, female complainants reported having their underwear stolen, or ‘snowdropping’ where their underwear would be stolen from the clothes line and returned the next day covered in excrement. One complainant who served at RAAF Base Amberley in the early 1980s told the Taskforce:

When I arrived at Amberley I underwent a lot of, what could be described as initiation practices, which included practical jokes. Again, there was also the usual sexist behaviour I had grown accustomed to. … Some of the practical jokes that were done to me, included, having a wet tampon soaked in tomato sauce [which represented blood], put in my full tea mug that I was drinking from. (One workmate would distract me, whilst another would put the tampon in my mug). I would discover it only after I had drunk half the contents of the mug. Another joke, was when the guys took the seat off my pushbike and replaced it with a condom. … Plastic explosive (PE4) was often moulded in the shape of male genitalia, and placed in my locker or on my work-bench. Magazine cuttings, illustrating women in crude positions, were also commonly displayed in front of me.

The same complainant also reported:

[T]here was an incident involving [a Flight Sergeant]. … At this function, I had a dress on, and as I was about to sit down, the [Flight Sergeant] pulled the chair out from under me. The result was quite unpleasant and embarrassing for me, as my underwear was exposed. The comment from [a senior officer] was that, “if I wanted to do a bloke’s job, he’d treat me like one”.

In summarising the effect of the sexual harassment she experienced as a woman in the Air Force, another complainant, who served in the early 1990s, told the Taskforce:

All of this left me in no doubt that the majority of my male colleagues considered me inferior in terms of intelligence and ability to do the job.

[c] Physical abuse during regular service in the Air Force

The physical abuse began when I was posted to my first unit. … This behaviour ranged from being pushed around, tackled to the ground as if one was playing football and the outright provocation to fight with fists. On many occasions I had to fight back hand to hand and for this I am truly angry as I never thought serving in the RAAF would see me having to fight my own people.

Physical abuse was the second most commonly reported form of abuse experienced by complainants within the Air Force. As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 144 cases as raising plausible allegations of physical abuse within the Air Force (38 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Air Force).
Of the 129 complainants who experienced abuse during regular Air Force service at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 48 complainants reported having been subjected to physical abuse (37 per cent of complaints reviewed). This included 30 male complainants and 18 female complainants.

Complainants told the Taskforce of physical abuse that occurred between the 1960s and 2011. From complaints made to the Taskforce, it appears that incidents of physical abuse in the Air Force increased rapidly during the 1980s and remained at a high level continuing though time into the 2000s. A number of complainants experienced ongoing campaigns of physical abuse over several months or in some cases years, however most complainants described experiencing isolated incidents of physical abuse.

The nature of the physical abuse experienced by complainants during regular service in the Air Force is discussed below, including physical assault, threats of violence, physical constraint, and physical abuse related to illness or injury.

(i) Physical assault

The Taskforce received a number of complaints involving physical assault that occurred in the context of harassment and bullying, often involving threatening behaviour as a means of intimidation. For example, complainants reported being dragged out of bed at night and bashed by members of their group. One complainant reported being physically assaulted by his peers at the instruction of his supervising officer at RAAF Base Amberley in the late 1980s:

> On one occasion I was set up in the back shed and assaulted by [a Leading Aircraftman] from one of [the Sergeant’s] men. I had done nothing to deserve it. He hit me in the face and I fell to the ground. The Sergeant knew about it and was outside when I reported it to him. He ignored it and said to me that “that’s how you work out your problems”.

Other complainants described being subjected to physically abusive acts designed to humiliate them in front of their peers. Complainants reported being spat on, and having objects thrown at them. The Taskforce also received reports from complainants of being ganged up on by multiple colleagues and having a rubbish can full of food scraps and liquids thrown over them before being violently hosed down with a fire hose.

(ii) Threats of violence

The Taskforce heard from many complainants who described feeling intimidated in the workplace, due to supervising officers who were openly hostile in the course of their work. A number of complainants reported having been faced with threats of violence during regular Air Force service. This included a number of complainants who told the Taskforce of having received threats via text messages and email.

One complainant told the Taskforce that at RAAF Base Williamtown in the late 1980s:

> [H]e called me into his office. He started ranting and raving about how I’d made him look bad. He then threatened to kill me, that is, he said, “You’ll be on a practice one day, and we will push you into the fire pit.” He said, “If we pushed you in there and say that you slipped and fell, no one would ever know the difference.”

(iii) Physical constraint

A number of complainants reported abuse in the form of being physically restrained or forcibly constrained. This included one complainant who was locked in a closed cell with no windows for 11 hours as punishment for arriving late to work, and another complainant who was locked in a fuel tank until I screamed to take the cover panel off and put the light back on. Another complainant described being forcibly constrained as a threat against reporting other abuse in the early 1970s:

> Numerous times I [was] grabbed by Air Force personnel in central store and locked in [the] rubber room. Rubber room [was] thick concrete full of tyres for vehicles and aircraft, it was sealed. The smell was terrible and sickening and after approximately 20 minutes I threw up twice. They would come back approximately 60 minutes later, hand me a mop and bucket and said clean it up and don’t rock the boat. This happened quite often to shut me up and for toeing the line. The other thing which happened to me many times was I was locked in the storage compacters for approximately 30–45 minutes and when they did let me out I felt sick, extremely hot, thirsty, anxious as you can well imagine. I now suffer from claustrophobia.
Some complainants described being physically constrained in the context of practical jokes, for example, one complainant who was thrown into a bath of chemicals during the early 1980s reported:

> Perhaps the most significant joke was the one which resulted in me being hospitalised [for one week]. I lay in a hospital bed, without clothes on, in extreme discomfort. The doctor’s written comment in my medical file regarding this incidence was, that I was admitted with “a rash all over my body, an acute urticarial reaction to chemicals”. The guys at work had picked me up and put me in a chemical bath which was used to clean the F111 aircraft Gatling guns.\(^{257}\)

Another complainant, who served in the Air Force during the late 1990s, described to the Taskforce the relative arbitrariness of some acts of physical abuse and the terror experienced by those who were subjected to it:

> As I attempted to walk through the doorway to exit the stairwell a number of the men grabbed me and handcuffed me by my hands (in front of my body). I was shocked and don’t recall saying anything at this time until they started to drag me against my will toward the bathroom/laundry of the third floor. The men dragged me into one of the individual shower cubicles and handcuffed me to the shower head. I am unsure how they did this as I was in shock. They turned the cold water on in the shower and left me there while they took turns to come in and laugh at me and leave again. I was unable to move out of the flow of the water and remained trapped in the shower under the cold running water for an extended period of time, in tears screaming for someone to help me.\(^{258}\)

(iv) Physical abuse related to illness or injury

A number of complainants experienced ongoing physical abuse in the context of a denial of medical treatment or being forced to participate in physically strenuous activities despite being under formal medical restriction. Complainants typically reported a negative attitude by supervisors or members of superior rank to illness or injury. This attitude often led to further physical injury after being denied appropriate rest. For example, complainants told the Taskforce of being accused of lying or faking an injury to get out of work.\(^{259}\)

One complainant who served at RAAF Base Edinburgh in the early 1990s told the Taskforce:

> During my recovery period post-surgery, I was placed on medical restrictions by my surgeon and base medical staff. My role was mainly a standing role, [and] I was unable to stand for long periods as the injury would swell and the pain levels were quite uncomfortable. ... I told [the Sergeant] of my discomfort and he told me to stop complaining and said use a stool and stop whinging. By this stage, my knee had started swelling and a build-up of pressure from swelling caused blood to seep through the bandages. [The Flight Sergeant and Sergeant] were present and told me stop whinging and get back to work. They called me a “malingering”, “weak” and a “faker”. ... I took myself to the Medical Officer and was given two weeks off work to recover from my injuries.\(^{260}\)

(d) Harassment and bullying during regular service in the Air Force

He told me that I was scum and trouble and that he was going to make sure that people like me would soon be kicked out of the RAAF and that it was not going to be long. I was terrified of him and of his staff.\(^{261}\)

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 253 cases as raising plausible allegations of harassment and bullying within the Air Force (67 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Air Force).

An overwhelmingly large number of complainants experienced harassment and bullying. Of the 129 complainants who experienced abuse during regular Air Force service at the locations closely reviewed by the Taskforce, 101 complainants reported having been subjected to harassment and bullying (78 per cent of complaints reviewed). This included a majority of male complainants, however, a number of female complainants also reported harassment and bullying (38 female complainants).

Complaints regarding harassment and bullying increased almost four-fold after the 1970s. Complaints of harassment and bullying that occurred after 1980 consistently outnumbered complaints about all other types of abuse within the Air Force. Though reports of harassment and bullying peaked following the 1980s, the forms of harassment and bullying experienced by complainants were fairly consistent throughout the entire time period considered by the Taskforce.
Complainants frequently reported being individually targeted for abuse,\textsuperscript{262} with one complainant describing it as ‘victimisation action by one specific person’.\textsuperscript{263} Complainants accounted for their abuse based on gender (being female),\textsuperscript{264} perceived weakness and being of smaller physical build,\textsuperscript{265} perceived sexuality,\textsuperscript{266} nationality,\textsuperscript{267} and race.\textsuperscript{268} Other complainants described being harassed and bullied after reporting illegalities\textsuperscript{269} or unsafe working conditions,\textsuperscript{270} for making a previous complaint about abuse,\textsuperscript{271} or being made a ‘scapegoat’ during investigations for offences committed by their colleagues.\textsuperscript{272} Many complainants described being targeted for abuse based on an alleged abuser’s dislike towards them.\textsuperscript{273} For example, one complainant who served at RAAF Base Amberley in the late 1980s told the Taskforce:

[H]e just hated me because everyone else on his team did. ... As a result of this hatred towards me, I was sent on every exercise, made to do extra duties and never compensated in extra time. If there was a distasteful job, I got it. At one stage the Sergeant grabbed me at the end of the day and dragged me down to the back shed. He took off his shirt and told me to shape up. I was never so scared in my life.\textsuperscript{274} 

A number of complainants experienced harassment and bullying by their peers and members of equivalent rank (18 complainants), as well as a few complainants who reported abuse carried out by subordinates\textsuperscript{275} or students.\textsuperscript{276} However, the vast majority of complainants told the Taskforce that the abuse they experienced was carried out by direct supervisors, training instructors or individuals in considerable positions of authority and seniority over them. A number of complainants experienced harassment and bullying carried out by particularly high ranking officers, including Air Commodores, Group Captains and Warrant Officers.\textsuperscript{277} This had particular implications for complainants, effectively denying them an avenue to report abuse, as their alleged abusers were often those directly in their chain of command. One complainant told the Taskforce he did not have the power to confront the alleged abuser about his behaviour as ‘it would be insubordination’ before adding that ‘the senior member is always going to be right’.\textsuperscript{279} 

Another complainant who was at RAAF Base Amberley in the late 1980s told the Taskforce:

I could not see any light at the end of the tunnel and my dreams and career had been turned upside down. I felt I was trapped there with no escape. People may wonder why I did not report what was going on. I was a junior airman, he was a Sergeant. I was young and impressionable, and was afraid of further victimisation.\textsuperscript{280} 

Complainants commonly described the inequalities in age and rank between themselves and their alleged abusers in the context of feeling intimidated\textsuperscript{281} and powerless,\textsuperscript{282} and often told the Taskforce of feeling distressed\textsuperscript{283} and demoralised\textsuperscript{284} as the harassment and bullying affected their career progression. As one complainant who served at RAAF Base Williamtown in the early 1990s told the Taskforce:

The unacceptable behaviour was constant and I felt that I was always tense and in a state of readiness for another incident and the feelings this would cause in me. Since there were no avenues for me to manage the behaviour and no support from my senior officers, my only recourse was to internalise the stress. This caused me to experience nausea, headaches, nervousness, watchfulness, patchy and deep blushing, and insomnia.\textsuperscript{285} 

Another complainant who served at RAAF Base Williamtown in the early 1980s described how:

This work environment was devastating to my self esteem and created intense anxiety, fear and self-loathing. I started doubting my reality and my abilities. I started to use alcohol more and withdrew into myself.\textsuperscript{286} 

The nature of the harassment and bullying experienced by complainants during regular service in the Air Force is discussed below, including verbal abuse, unreasonable tasks and demands, interference with career progression, ostracism and social exclusion, and harassment and bullying related to illness or injury.

(i) Verbal abuse

[The Sergeant] escalated her abuse with taunts, put downs e.g. saying how stupid I must be to not be able follow simple instructions, she called me a retard in front of the other staff members and officers who did nothing to help me; she also referred to me as “that retard criminal” on a daily basis.\textsuperscript{287}
Complainants told the Taskforce of experiencing a range of verbal abuse, including being criticised both personally and for their work performance on a relentless basis during the course of their employment.

Complainants reported being berated and yelled at in an aggressive manner, receiving abusive phone calls outside of work hours. Some complainants reported being singled out for abuse, such as one complainant who was told that he had a ‘target on [his] back’, and another complainant who was at RAAF Base Laverton in the late 1990s reported:

> I undertook all tasks in a professional, timely and comprehensive manner. ... My recommendations were well received and implemented despite receiving abusive threats from [my supervisor]. She would frequently make covert comments such as “you cannot afford to put a foot wrong, I will continue to make your life hell, I have no problem with your work, I just don’t like you.”

Other complainants reported being called names that criticised their capabilities and the manner in which they performed their work, such as ‘fuck head’, ‘fuck-wit’, ‘useless cunt’, and being labelled a ‘troublemaker’. Some complainants described being denigrated and belittled in other ways, for example, one complainant who was told by a supervising officer during an additional skills training course that ‘you’re not going to pass anyway, so you might as well just quit now’.

Another complainant who was at RAAF Base Williamtown in the late 1980s told the Taskforce:

> I arrived at work one day early, as usual and I was polishing my boots. [The Corporal] arrived and said ‘What are you fucking doing, you fucking suck hole?’ He was right in my face, and he wanted to beat me up, just because I was shining my boots. He told me that I needed “physical counselling” to sort out my attitude. He [and others] felt threatened by me because they thought I made them look bad, just by doing my job correctly.

(ii) Unreasonable tasks and demands

Many complainants told the Taskforce of being ordered to perform objectively unreasonable tasks, and subjected to excessively harsh or arbitrary disciplinary practices by their superiors for failing to complete their demands. For example, complainants reported being singled out to work long hours or in uncomfortable working environments, as well as being repeatedly ordered to perform additional work shifts with no prior notice. Other complainants reported being ordered to repeat tasks already completed, or tasks typically performed by members of lower rank to the complainant.

Many complainants told the Taskforce of being threatened by members of superior rank for not completing tasks which they considered to be unreasonable. This included threats to charge the complainant with spurious offences, or with disobeying a lawful command. Some complainants described being detained, charged and punished for being Absent Without Official Leave (AWOL) at times when they had already been given permission to take leave. Other complainants reported being singled out for punishment and treated differently compared to their co-workers. For example, one complainant was ordered by her supervising officer to undertake every ‘voluntary’ physical training session, as well as being required to perform in every parade. Other complainants reported being prohibited from performing certain activities enjoyed by other colleagues, such as being ordered not to lean against a desk when filing paperwork, or ordered not to smoke cigarettes.

(iii) Interference with career progression

[The Sergeant] continued with her daily tactics of targeted abuse, micromanagement, sabotage and exclusion where I would not find out about things until after the fact which guaranteed a tirade of abuse for not knowing about something important.

The Taskforce received reports of a range of negative behaviours carried out by supervising staff and members of superior rank affecting a complainant’s reputation in the workplace, as well as deliberate attempts to discredit their personal character and work ethic. These kinds of behaviours appear to be particularly characteristic of abuse experienced by complainants in recent decades. For example, complainants told the Taskforce of being accused of lying, or being accused of ‘sleeping [their] way to the top’. Other complainants reported being excluded from the chain of command, undermined and ridiculed in front of subordinates and students, and having their input belittled in front of other personnel. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that in the early 2000s:
My new supervisor ... seemed to talk to me in harsh tones from day one, always criticising me for my work, and always seemed to make comments about my “lack of professionalism” when others were around. ... Every day I was belittled over any task I undertook. Normally this was done in the “public eye” of the section, never in the privacy of an office or other area. She had two favourite members in the section – both the same rank as myself – and seemed to always attack my work ethic when they were in earshot. It was demoralising and embarrassing. She would do this even if we had visitors in the section.

Complainants reported being threatened by supervising staff with a reduction in rank, and receiving poor and career-damaging performance evaluation reports for personal reasons and without the opportunity to challenge the negative assessments that had been made. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce about his treatment at RAAF Base Richmond in the late 2000s:

[The Warrant Officer] used my annual report as a way of bullying me ... by putting the promotion recommendation as 'Not Suitable For Promotion' ... I told [the Warrant Officer] that I disagreed with the assessment. He replied along the lines of ‘Your equity complaint [at a previous base] screwed me over, so it is now time to get crucified as I promised.’

The Taskforce received a number of reports that supervising staff would halt a complainant’s career progression through denial of additional skills development and training opportunities, and by refusing to allow complainants to complete the necessary requirements for education and training courses. Equally, some complainants experienced the unfair application of workplace rules and policies, for example, by being required to undertake training courses and sit tests that they had already completed and passed. Other complainants reported being overlooked for deployments while other, less experienced, members went instead. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that in the early 1980s:

[The Flight Sergeant] treated me unjustly whilst I was at Edinburgh. In relation to the training courses I was required to complete in order to enable me to work on the various aircraft and associated equipment, I was continually superseded, and personnel posted in after me would get these courses ahead of me. This meant my work was limited, and it made me look inept in other tradesmen’s eyes.

(iv) Ostracism and social exclusion

I did not fit his style from day one. That meant that if he didn’t like me then neither did the rest of the group. It was not that I did not want to fit in, but that was the way it was. If you did not fit in from the start you never would. I was isolated from the beginning.

A number of complainants experienced harassment and bullying in the form of being ostracised in the workplace, with some complainants reporting being excluded at the instigation of their supervising officers. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that at RAAF Base Amberley in the late 2000s:

I was segregated by this Sergeant and his mates, picked on and scrutinised to the point where I could not even have a smoko or lunch in my section. I used to eat with a friend, who was a civilian working in the supply section. He became my therapist of sorts. He helped me through the hard times, when I was suicidal from grief and depression.

Other complainants reported being socially isolated by groups of their peers, for example, one complainant reported that in the early 2000s:

I would walk into my office at work and catch these two women, along with other co-workers and supervisors talking about me in a derogatory manner. It was made very apparent by their behaviour towards me that I was not welcome in the workplace and they would refuse to speak to me in the office unless directed to by a supervisor.

In describing the effects of this exclusion, another complainant who served at RAAF Base Williamtown in the early 2000s told the Taskforce:

The whole basis of the military are the values of: camaraderie, morale and discipline. It was this betrayal of trust. It is still difficult now to come to grips with.
(v) Harassment and bullying related to illness or injury

The Taskforce received a number of complaints regarding harassment and bullying in the context of a complainant’s illness and injury. Complainants reported being told by supervising staff to ‘harden up’, and were accused of being a hypochondriac or a malingerer.

Complainants reported being ridiculed by their peers when suffering from illness or injury, for example, one complainant who told the Taskforce: ‘Even though I had the medical certificate, I preferred to hide during parade so that I didn’t have to sit out the front for the marchers to stare and be ridiculed.’

18.6 Locational case studies

(a) RAAF Base Wagga

RAAF Base Wagga is located at Wagga Wagga, in the south-west of New South Wales. Initially called RAAF Base Forest Hill, RAAF Base Wagga was first developed as an Air Force base in 1940. Since then, RAAF Base Wagga has been a key training establishment for the Air Force, providing technical and non-technical initial employment and postgraduate training.

In 1946, the base was declared the home for all Ground Training with the establishment of the Ground Training School. In 1950, the RAAF School of Technical Training was established and RAAF Base Wagga became the home of the RAAF Apprentice Scheme, which trained both technical and non-technical trades’ professionals. The RAAF Apprentice Scheme ran from 1960 to 1992, largely comprising training programs located at RAAF Base Wagga and RAAF Base Laverton. RAAF Base Wagga has also been the location for the No 1 Recruit Training Unit, during 1960 to 1964, and from 2008 until present, providing initial recruit training for newly enlisted personnel. In 1985, the RAAF School of Management and Technology Training was set up at RAAF Base Wagga to train instructors, course developers, training managers, training administrators and educational officers, and came under the control of the School of Postgraduate Studies, RAAF College, in 1998.

The Taskforce received complaints from 55 complainants which were assessed to be within the scope of the Taskforce Terms of Reference and to raise plausible allegations of abuse at RAAF Base Wagga. Below is some statistical information about complaints of abuse at RAAF Base Wagga.

Abuse by decade:
- 1960s – nine complainants;
- 1970s – 11 complainants;
- 1980s – 20 complainants;
- 1990s – 10 complainants; and
- 2000s – seven complainants.

Complainants:
- male – 34 complainants;
- female – 21 complainants; and
- 41 complainants were undertaking initial training at the time of the abuse.

Category of abuse:
- 31 complainants reported sexual abuse;
- 14 complainants reported sexual harassment;
- 28 complainants reported physical abuse; and
- 35 complainants reported harassment and bullying.
As RAAF Base Wagga has primarily operated as a training establishment, a large number of complaints concerned abuse that occurred during initial training (41 complainants).

Many of these complainants experienced abuse carried out by senior apprentices against junior apprentices, suggesting a strong culture of abuse within the RAAF Apprentice Scheme between 1960 and the late 1980s. Junior apprentices or ‘sprogs’ were typically aged between 15 and 17 years old at the time of abuse, and reported being considered ‘a lower form of life’ than second and third year apprentices. This hierarchical culture appears to have fostered a perception of initiation or hazing practices as a rite of passage at RAAF Base Wagga. Furthermore, many complainants told the Taskforce that these practices were accepted and often encouraged within Defence.

(i) Sexual abuse

Over half of all complaints of abuse at RAAF Base Wagga involved sexual abuse (31 complainants). This included 16 male complainants and 15 female complainants. Most complainants experienced one-off incidents of abuse carried out by alleged abusers in actual or perceived positions of seniority to complainants at the time of the abuse.

A number of complainants reported sexual assault carried out by members of staff between 1960 and the late 1980s (six complainants). All of these complaints involved abuse carried out by male staff against young boys, almost all of whom were under 18 years of age at the time of abuse. Several of these complainants reported that they had been deliberately plied with alcohol, or drugged, prior to the abuse (five complainants).

A significant proportion of male complainants were subjected to sexual abuse carried out by peers or senior peers (nine complainants). Of these, two thirds related to abuse carried out by a group of males seemingly in the context of ongoing harassment and bullying (six complainants). Several complainants experienced sexual abuse in the form of greasing, a painful and humiliating practice involving being held down while the genital area and rectum was covered with boot polish or toothpaste using a hard-bristled brush. One complainant told the Taskforce of being forced to participate in a baby elephant walk (described in section 18.4(a)(iii) above). These practices suggest that sexual abuse was often carried out for the purpose of humiliating and degrading newer intakes, or asserting hierarchical superiority, rather than necessarily for sexual gratification.

Female complainants typically reported single incidents of sexual abuse carried out by male peers or members of staff, involving non-consensual vaginal penetration or indecent assault (13 complainants). These reports of abuse occurred from the late 1980s until the late 2000s, with the majority having taken place in the 1990s (eight complainants).

Notably, three complainants reported sexual abuse which involved being photographed or filmed while naked or engaging in sexual acts. Several female complainants also told the Taskforce of being subjected to serious harassment and bullying after having made a form report of sexual abuse to Defence.

(ii) Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment was the least common form of abuse at RAAF Base Wagga (14 complainants). This included both isolated incidents of sexual harassment, as well as many complainants who experienced ongoing campaigns of sexual harassment. The majority of these complainants were women (11 complainants).

Complainants reported a wide range of experiences in relation to sexual harassment. These included being propositioned for sex in exchange for favours, having degrading and explicit comments graffitied in public places, and being exposed to pornographic material including pictures of naked children. Several complainants told the Taskforce of being subjected to further victimisation and blame upon reporting the abuse, whereby officials placed excessive focus on what the complainant had done to prompt the abuse instead of attributing responsibility to the alleged abuser.

(iii) Physical abuse

More than half of all complaints of abuse at RAAF Base Wagga involved physical abuse (28 complainants). The vast majority of complainants who reported physical abuse were male (21 complainants), and most complainants reported having been physically abused on more than three occasions (18 complainants).
A large proportion of complainants experienced physical abuse carried out by senior apprentices against junior apprentices in tandem with harassment and bullying, as part of hazing or initiation practices. Physical abuse in this context was often referred to as rumbling, which encompassed a variety of practices, typically including bed tipping (10 complainants) [described in section 18.4(c)(iv) above], and physical assault.346

In addition, complainants reported several other types of physical abuse at RAAF Base Wagga. This included firehosing or sprog washing (nine complainants) [described in section 18.4(c)(vii) above], crucifixion or Jesus showers [described in section 18.4(c)(iii) above], and grot baths or chemical baths [described in section 18.4(c)(vi) above].348 Very few complainants reported physical abuse carried out by members of staff at RAAF Base Wagga and all of these complainants reported isolated incidents of abuse. However, several complainants told the Taskforce that members of staff witnessed, and implicitly condoned, the serious and widespread acts of physical abuse carried out amongst apprentices and trainees.

(iii) Harassment and bullying

A high proportion of complaints of abuse at RAAF Base Wagga involved some form of harassment and bullying (35 complainants). Almost all of the incidents falling within this category of abuse were part of sustained and ongoing campaigns of harassment and bullying (33 complainants). Of these, two thirds of complainants were men (22 complainants), and one third were women (11 complainants).

The forms of harassment and bullying experienced by junior apprentices varied greatly. Complainants reported being made to complete errands and menial tasks for senior apprentices.350 They also reported that senior apprentices regularly damaged and disturbed their property.351 In addition to these more "traditional" forms of harassment and bullying, many complaints described scenarios where members of newer intakes were ordered to engage in absurd and degrading practices by senior peers, seemingly designed to maximise humiliation. For example, one complainant described his intake being made to participate in a piss parade [described in section 18.4(c)(i) above].352 Often, the harassment and bullying had sexual undertones. For example, some complainants were stripped naked.353

Some complainants noted that the harassment and bullying was targeted at those who were smaller, or weaker than their peers. However, the majority of the abuse appears to have been carried out indiscriminately in groups for the purpose of reinforcing informal hierarchies.

(b) RAAF Base Amberley

RAAF Base Amberley is the largest Air Force base in Australia, employing over 5000 people.354 Located 40 kilometres south-west of Brisbane,355 RAAF Base Amberley has been used for military operations since 1938.356 Its primary role is to provide full operational and maintenance support for the Precision Strike element of the Air Combat Group.357

The Taskforce received complaints from 39 complainants which were assessed to be within the Taskforce Terms of Reference and to raise plausible allegations of abuse at RAAF Base Amberley. Below is some statistical information about complaints of abuse at RAAF Base Amberley.

Year of abuse:
- 1970s – six complainants;
- 1980s – six complainants;
- 1990s – six complainants; and
- 2000s – 21 complainants.
Complainants:
- male – 24 complainants;
- female – 15 complainants; and
- 37 complainants were in regular service at the time of the abuse.

Category of abuse:
- 12 complainants reported sexual abuse;
- eight complainants reported sexual harassment;
- 13 complainants reported physical abuse; and
- 29 complainants reported harassment and bullying.

As RAAF Base Amberley is not a training establishment, only two complainants reported abuse that occurred during initial training. The overwhelming number of complaints involved abuse which occurred during regular Air Force service.

A significant number of complainants experienced abuse that occurred at RAAF Base Amberley during the period of 2000 to 2011 (21 out of 39 complainants).

(i) Sexual abuse
Sexual abuse was reported by 12 complainants, comprising slightly less than a third of all complainants who experienced abuse at RAAF Base Amberley. The majority of these complainants were women (nine complainants), and all of the alleged abusers in incidents of sexual abuse were men. While sexual abuse was experienced by female complainants across the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, the sexual abuse reported by male complainants took place in the 1970s.

Many complaints of sexual abuse involved serious sexual assault, including vaginal, anal and digital penetration. Some complainants reported being sexually assaulted by multiple alleged abusers. Several complainants who were sexually abused at RAAF Base Amberley described being intoxicated at the time of assault, making it difficult to prevent the attack. Others reported being sexually abused by alleged abusers who had been consuming alcohol.

Seven complainants experienced indecent assault at RAAF Base Amberley, all of whom were women. This included groping or touching their breasts, groin, and buttocks, inappropriate touching, pinching the complainant’s genitals, and forcing the complainant to touch an alleged abuser’s penis. These indecent assaults took place during social functions, medical examinations, and work tasks.

(ii) Sexual harassment
Sexual harassment was the least common form of abuse experienced by complainants at RAAF Base Amberley (eight complainants). All of these complainants were women, and all of the alleged abusers were men.

Most complainants reported that they were sexually harassed in conjunction with other types of abuse, predominantly sexual abuse, and harassment and bullying. For example, several complainants reported being groped at their breasts or genitals, or inappropriately touched while being asked for sexual favours. Others reported being exposed to pornographic images, or subjected to explicit comments and insults, such as ‘fat pregnant bitch’. One complainant described being forced to share male showers and toilet facilities for several years, exposing her to naked co-workers.

Several complainants reported being exposed to inappropriate and offensive pranks, including superiors parading naked around the base, games which involved sucking marshmallows out of belly buttons of male colleagues, having tampons with sauce put in the complainant’s full mug of tea, having their underwear cut, finding that a bike seat had been replaced with a condom, and being presented with explosives shaped to portray male genitalia.
(iii) Physical abuse

Physical abuse was the second most commonly reported type of abuse experienced by complainants at RAAF Base Amberley (13 complainants). The majority of complainants who reported physical abuse were men (10 complainants). Most complainants reported that the alleged abusers were also men (11 complainants).

Almost all physical abuse was experienced by complainants in conjunction with other forms of abuse. For example, one complainant reported being subjected to a series of abusive incidents that included being thrown into a bath of chemicals, as well as incidents of sexual assault and sexual harassment. Others reported being physically assaulted or threatened with assault as part of campaigns of harassment and bullying by their supervisors or work colleagues.

Several complainants reported being subjected to serious physical assault that included being punched on the back of the head while working on a computer, bashed by multiple alleged abusers at a private residence, or hit in the face and knocked to the ground by a single assailant.

Reports of physical abuse also included being physically restrained or trapped. Complainants reported being grabbed and dragged, locked in hot rooms and storage compactors, including one complainant who was locked in a fuel tank ‘until I screamed to take the cover panel off and put the light back on’.

Complainants also reported being threatened with physical assault by superiors, co-workers and subordinates, such as the threat to ‘beat the shit’ out of them, or take them ‘out the back and thump’ them, as well as receiving death threats.

(iv) Harassment and bullying

The majority of complainants at RAAF Base Amberley reported some form of harassment or bullying (29 out of 39 complainants), with most incidents taking place over the period from 2000 to 2011 (20 complainants). Approximately two thirds of complainants who experienced harassment and bullying were men (21 complainants). An overwhelming number of complainants reported that the harassment and bullying was carried out on an ongoing basis, rather than as a single incident of abuse.

Most complainants reported that they were harassed and bullied by their direct supervisor or superior, in circumstances in which they abused their position in the chain of command. For example, by denying complainants training and work entitlements, giving career damaging or unsubstantiated performance reports, and withholding pay entitlements. Some complainants reported that their supervisor was openly hostile to them, or would berate or degrade them in front of other colleagues. A few complainants also reported that their superior interfered with their work or ordered them to perform inappropriate or demeaning tasks.

Verbal abuse was the most commonly reported form of harassment and bullying, including being yelled at using offensive language, and being subjected to belittling remarks and put downs in public. Several complainants also reported receiving derogatory emails. Complainants were abused with offensive terms and nicknames, such as ‘fuckwit’ and ‘idiot’, and others reported that this kind of abuse often resulted in being socially excluded by their colleagues and peers.

A number of complainants reported being targeted for campaigns of abuse on account of perceived differences, such as their small stature, or gender, or because they had injuries. In addition, complainants reported being harassed and bullied following their experiences of other abuse. Some complainants told the Taskforce that they were harassed and bullied after reporting the unacceptable or illicit behaviour of others.

18.7 Individual case studies

(a) Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1960s

[in] the late 1960s I enlisted with the RAAF as a Radio Technician apprentice. I was 16 years of age. ... I enlisted with about 50 other young 15 and 16 year old boys who were selected on their academic merit and personal qualities. ... My family were extremely proud to see me enter the RAAF to obtain the academic qualifications that I sought and to do service to the nation as my father and many uncles had done before me during the Second World War. ...
During the first year of our service life as first year apprentices we were considered “the lowest form of life” (we were frequently told this by senior apprentices and staff) and we had to put up with it. From the beginning we were subjected to considerable amounts of intimidation, bullying and physical violence called “sprogging” [bastardisation] by senior apprentices. Staff knew of the abuse and referred to it as “the normal hazing that new boys receive everywhere.” …

At age 16 I did not anticipate or expect these kinds of things to happen to me when I committed myself to the RAAF as an apprentice Radio Technician, and no parent having invested years of love and time in a child for their future wellbeing would have anticipated or expected these kinds of things to happen. …

As first year apprentices there is no doubt that we lived in constant fear and trepidation of being met by senior apprentices around our billets and on bus trips who had us always “on edge”, waiting for the next “bit of sprogging” to be enacted. …

The following is a selection of abuse that continued throughout the year ... by [senior] apprentices:

- We were dragged out into the night on evenings when we were supposed to be doing weekly cleaning tasks and made to do “rain dances” in an effort to stop the official parade. We were assaulted constantly for not dancing hard enough and for any indiscretion that was said we had made.
- We were forced to do tasks for the senior apprentices under threats of physical violence, all being regular occurrences, e.g. made to do many trips to the canteen to purchase silly things, e.g. a box of matches and bring them back one at a time, made to supply cigarettes to senior apprentices and to change brands of cigarettes.
- We were intimidated into hitting other junior apprentices/friends under threat that if we didn’t do so the second year apprentices would really hurt them.
- Made to stand up against a wall and second year started punching me in the stomach. Hit up under the jaw knocking my head backwards sharply into contact with wall. Collapsed to the floor. …
- Made to crawl on all fours down a hallway with a second year standing on my back. The second year dropped his knees on my back causing me extreme pain and discomfort. …
- We had our beds flipped resulting in no sleep. This often happened multiple times in the night. Dragged from under an unmade bed and punched in the stomach, kicked and hit for not remaking my bed.
- One member hiding in a cupboard only to have his finger slammed with a hammer because it was poking out a hole to hold the door closed.
- Our doorless rooms allowed for each hut senior course leader to have at each room a senior course member in the dead of the night and on a prearranged signal grab our beds (a lightweight metal frame) and throw us into the air and to the floor often with the bed, mattress and blankets crashing down on top of us, leaving us dazed and shocked.
- Each hut had a senior course leader in one room and on one occasion a voice was raised “keep in your rooms frogs” and a 22 cal rifle was fired down the corridor hitting the closed back door.

Too many times this brazen action left us fearing for life and limb.

There were physical beatings, resulting in severe injuries. …

I can personally add that [a second year apprentice] made me stand in the aisle of a moving bus with my arms outstretched while he punched me in the stomach many times enough to cause me great pain and double over. He did so with obvious total disregard to my wellbeing and without any indication of guilt or shame. All other persons on the bus (mostly second year apprentices) witnessed this abuse and no person came to assist me. We were travelling to Ocean Grove to camp. … At Ocean Grove there was a cliff on the beach known as “Frogs Leap”. Probably within a day of arriving at Ocean Grove the senior apprentices would line up the junior apprentices and have them take a run to the cliff and jump off; not knowing what was beyond the edge.
On another occasion back at our huts, two or three senior apprentices made me sit in a double laundry trough containing hot and cold water with my legs and feet in one end and my body in the other end. This was in the freezing cold of winter.

It is glaringly obvious it was a continuing culture of physical abuse, workplace harassment and bullying, perpetuated by staff who considered it “the normal hazing that new boys receive everywhere”. It was wrong and has had a lasting and serious impact on the lives or some or most of those who have suffered it.

(b) Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 1980s

In the early 1980s I joined the Royal Australian Air Force. I was 17 years of age when I joined the Royal Australian Air Force. …

I was indecently assaulted and subjected to sexual harassment on a constant and ongoing basis whilst serving in the Australian Defence Force. … I was an Aircraftwoman in the Royal Australian Air Force at the time of the abuse.

The abuse started within a week of my arrival at [the base]. The various episodes of sexual abuse took place in multiple locations on the base, including the Officer’s Mess Kitchen, the Officer’s Mess Dining Room, the Officer’s Mess Accommodation, the Car Park, and [the bar on base].

In the Officers Mess Accommodation I was frequently requested to engage in sexual intercourse and oral sex by Officers whilst I was changing their sheets and cleaning. During my time as a Steward, I was frequently touched inappropriately on the breasts and genitals. I was groped in the Mess Kitchen and in the Car Park after work had finished, mainly by some of my male co-workers and the male cooks. I recall I was groped in the Car Park on at least four occasions.

One of the perpetrators in the Car Park was [a Steward] I worked with. In [the bar] situated on base, I was also touched inappropriately by drunken cooks and stewards. This occurred at least three times.

I had to wear overalls when on wash up duty, and many times my male co-workers would try to unzip the overalls to see what I was wearing underneath. On one occasion I recall clearly, one of the Stewards pulled his penis out in front of me and began rubbing it against me in the Kitchen.

I was forced to touch the genitals of other members on occasion.

At the time of the sexual abuse and harassment, I was made to believe that it was normal and acceptable practice by my superiors. As I was young and naïve at the time, I accepted that it was in fact normal and acceptable for vulnerable minors like me to be treated as such.

I joined the Royal Australian Air Force at a young age of 16 years and eight months. I feel that as a result of my young age and my naivety, I was definitely targeted. I did not deserve to be taken advantage of the way I was during my time on base. …

I was constantly requested to engage in various forms of sexual intercourse, including oral sex.

In the female change rooms, a hole was drilled into the wall so as to allow the male cooks and stewards to watch the female members undress. We were unaware of this for some time.

I am certain that there were many episodes of sexual assault which took place against my other co-workers, especially in the Kitchen and Dining Room. Likewise, the incidents I faced were usually witnessed by other staff members. …

Two individual perpetrators which I can recall are [an Aircraftman] and a [Leading Aircraftman]. Other perpetrators consisted of a Corporal and other Officers.

The abuse at [this base] lasted between six – seven months. …

After the assaults, I reported the abuse verbally to my Superior, the Warrant Officer who was in charge of all stewards. He told me to “Toughen up” and an official report was never made. In response to my verbal report to my Superior, my complaints were ignored and were never investigated. I was told to ignore the abuse and to forget about it, which made me feel as though I was invisible.
Serving in the Royal Australian Air Force and the abuse which accompanied my service completely changed me as a person, and had I realised the abuse I would have been subjected to during my service, I would never have joined.

Since leaving the RAAF I have suffered from Anxiety and Depression. I have seen many psychologists, psychiatrists and mental health nurses since my discharge. I have attempted suicide on three separate occasions. I have been prescribed medication for my mental health conditions although I am not currently taking any. ...

I tried to block out the abuse after I was discharged because I found it easier to believe it never happened. I was in denial for a long time. Then it all caught up with me years later and I was forced to seek treatment for my Anxiety and Depression. ... I have difficulty in mixing with other people because I feel like damaged goods.  

[c] Female Air Force member, [Locations redacted], 1990s

My service in the Royal Australian Air Force was [throughout the 1990s]. ...

While on [a course], I met [another girl in training]. We instantly became friends. One night she came into my room crying. She told me that she had been raped by a fellow colleague [an Aircraftman]. She told me this straight after it had happened. [The Aircraftman] was on a different course to us. [The Aircraftman’s] father was the Warrant Officer Disciplinary at the base.

[The other girl on training] and I reported the incident the following morning. We approached our course Sergeant and advised her of what had happened. The Sergeant told the Commanding Officer who informed the Officer Commanding. We were then taken to the Officer Commanding of the base to report the incident. The RAAF police were also present.

I was informed by the Officer Commanding and the RAAF Police that [the other girl on training] was lying about her assault. She was subsequently discharged from RAAF. I advised the Officer Commanding that I believed [she] was telling the truth. I was informed that if I continued to believe [the other girl on training’s] assault and that if I mentioned it to anyone I would be discharged also. I therefore didn’t speak of the incident and continued with my training.

Two weeks later I was sleeping in my quarters on base when there was a knock on the door. [The same Aircraftman] was shouting out that he needed to talk to me urgently. It was approximately 1.00am. When I opened the door, [the Aircraftman] and another male had pushed their way through the door and pushed me onto my bed. I was struggling as they put their hands over my mouth so I couldn’t scream. I couldn’t get away. [The Aircraftman] penetrated his penis into my vagina and the other male put his penis into my mouth. I struggled as much as I could to get away but I couldn’t. I couldn’t even scream. It felt like hours had passed but it was only a matter of minutes that this incident went on for. I remember crying and looking around the room and praying for it to stop. I was so scared and so worried that they would hurt me. I was wishing I was dead.

A short time had passed when [a friend] walked past my room. The door was still open at this point. She came through the door to see what was happening and [the Aircraftman] and the other male ran out of the room. At this time I still had no pants on. ...

I was so worried I would get kicked out of the Air Force if I spoke about what had happened as [the other girl on training] had been discharged for reporting her assault involving [the Aircraftman]. I feared that I too would get kicked out of the Air Force if I reported the incident against [the Aircraftman]. ...

[Later that year] I was posted to [another base] to complete my service in stewarding. My first job was at the Officer’s Mess. ...

There was a [Squadron Leader] who on many occasions would threaten me if I didn’t dance with him or let him kiss me. He said he would have me charged if I didn’t do as he asked. As much as I disliked dancing with him and doing as he asked, I was really worried he would pull through with his threats and have me charged with something. ...
Shortly after, I was sent on a bush exercise. ... The exercise lasted a week. On the last night of the exercise we were allowed to have two alcoholic drinks. As I had a headache and was not feeling well, I went to my tent early while everyone else was in the main tent drinking. I awoke to someone groping me and dragging me out the back of my tent. I struggled and screamed and the person who was dragging me ran off into the bushes somewhere. My Sergeant and a few other people came running to me. My Sergeant tried to calm me down and sent a few guys to try and find the guy in the bushes. The guys had found the person who attacked me and brought him back. The person who attacked me was one of the members on exercise with us. The Sergeant then called a “Kangaroo Court”. The Sergeant acted as a judge and decided that the person was guilty. The punishment was a bashing from one of the members on our exercise. He was beaten up. I was told to “shut my mouth” and that if I did open my mouth that nobody would believe me anyway. So again, I did not speak out about what had happened to me. ...

A year later, I was posted to [another base]. ... Prior to the commencement of my shift, I was changing into my bar uniform. After I got changed I sat in the change room, looked up and saw a video camera. I followed the leads and found that the leads attached to a video recorder above the keg room. It was set on record. I felt sick. ...

Within days there were rumours around the mess about the camera. Members of the Sergeant’s Mess approached me making comments about me being on video camera changing. I followed the leads and found that No one apologised or said that it was wrong that the camera was in the room. No one accepted responsibility. Instead what started to happen was that excuses were made as to why the camera had been there. ... I cannot describe how dreadful and alone I felt as a result of the behaviour by Command. All they needed to say was sorry and to provide me with support. I believe that would have made a lot of different to me.

I felt humiliated and victimised. People began to talk about the video camera and I became known as the girl on the video. As I stayed on the job after the incident I was also subjected to comments such as “I’ll have a Scotch and Coke and a copy of that tape”. I would constantly feel disgusted, embarrassed and victimised. I felt like I was being held responsible for being seen on camera ... From this point forward, people within the RAAF treated me differently and I felt like they were blaming me for speaking out and their response was to get rid of me. ...

My life was made hell for speaking out. For instance, I was removed from my position in the Mess and I was placed on cleaning duties where I had to make 50 beds per day, clean numerous toilets and do dishes during meal times. ... This job was normally done on rotation but I was made to do it for approximately one year. I was also required to work nights as a Porter in the Officer's Mess. This was after I told my Flight Sergeant that I was scared of working on my own around drunken men due to previous assaults. I believe to this day I was being punished for speaking out about the camera in the change room.

After approximately a year and a half of being punished I couldn’t take it anymore. I applied for a discharge. My discharge was approved and I left the service. ...

Since this day I have not been able to block the assault at all. ... I was diagnosed with depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and anxiety. I am on anti-depressants and sedatives so I can sleep and not wake up with nightmares. ... Even though I am medicated, I still feel anxious whenever I have to be out shopping or doing other things alone. I get horrible panic attacks when I go out in public places alone. ...

I still look back to my time at the RAAF and ask myself if it was all my fault and that maybe I did something to deserve it. I feel sick in the stomach whenever I think about it.413

[d] Female Air Force member, [Locations redacted], late 1990s to late 2000s

I joined the Air Force straight from high school two months after my 17th birthday. ...

The Air Force to me was to be a career, a lifestyle and a family that I would join. I believed if I worked hard, did as I was ordered and proved myself I would succeed in my chosen mustering and be treated with respect and equality. ...
From the very beginning of my military career I was subjected to unacceptable behaviour by colleagues and superiors. On one occasion ... I had gone to sleep in my room, which I shared with another [girl], to be woken by a [male] sitting on my bed watching me while I slept. The dorm room that I shared was not able to be locked, nor was the block in which it was located and as a result the [male] entered the female only residence and entered my room. ... At no stage did I invite this male person to enter my room. My female roommate was woken by the male intruder and shouted out which woke me from my sleep. ... The incident was reported to the [course] instructors and I was interviewed regarding these events. To the best of my knowledge the [male] was reprimanded with some form of formal warning but no further action was taken. ...

This incident however was to set the stage for a career filled with unacceptable sexual and physical abuse and bullying which has had an adverse effect on my life. ...

[In the late 1990s] I was living in the on base accommodation at [another base]. I decided to visit a friend who was also living on base in one of the [other] accommodation blocks. ... I had climbed the internal staircase all the way to the third floor where my friend's room was. Upon ascending the final set of stairs in the staircase I encountered a group of guys that appeared to know me. I did not know any of the men per se but I was familiar with a couple of their faces. ... I noticed that the men were joking around with something but I didn’t know what. The men were all sitting and standing in the landing in front of the door to leave the stairwell and access the third floor. I had to push past the men in order to exit the stairwell. As I attempted to walk through the doorway to exit the stairwell a number of the men grabbed me and handcuffed me by my hands (in front of my body). I was shocked and don’t recall saying anything at this time until they started to drag me against my will toward the bathroom/laundry of the third floor. The men dragged me into one of the individual shower cubicles and handcuffed me to the shower head. I am unsure how they did this as I was in shock. They turned the cold water on in the shower and left me there while they took turns to come in and laugh at me and leave again. I was unable to move out of the flow of the water and remained trapped in the shower under the cold running water for an extended period of time, in tears screaming for someone to help me. Eventually (I am unsure how long it took them to arrive but it would have been in excess of 20 mins) a member of the RAAF Police section arrived and was able to free me from the handcuffs and the shower cubicle. ...

[Later] I was sexually harassed and intimidated by my then Section Commander Flight Sergeant. [The Flight Sergeant] had made several inappropriate remarks about my appearance over a short period of time but on one occasion he made particular reference to the shape of my bum when I was wearing shorts at work. ... At the time I just let the comments go and did not really react as I was very uncomfortable. [He] was my Section Commander and I did not feel comfortable to complain immediately about his behaviour. ...

I was posted in [the early 2000s to another base]. ... In this working environment I was subjected to continuous [daily] harassment where I was intimidated and bullied by co-workers. I was made to feel worthless and would be reduced to tears on an almost daily basis. In this workplace I worked with two women [Corporals] in particular that were the instigators of the bullying. ... I would walk in to my office at work and catch these two women, along with other co-workers and supervisors talking about me in a derogatory manner. It was made very apparent by their behaviour towards me that I was not welcome in the workplace and they would refuse to speak to me in the office unless directed to by a supervisor. On several occasions when I was first posted to the section and required assistance with tasks that I was unfamiliar with I would ask particularly [one of the female Corporals] for help and she would refuse to help me, telling me if I needed help to “ask someone else”.

On several occasions I would overhear both [the female Corporals] making degrading comments about my “sleeping to the top” referring to how I was promoted. I was ridiculed in front of my subordinates and students by these two women and was made to feel worthless. ...

Another example of the behaviour that I was subjected to was I was banned by my supervisors from sitting or leaning on the edge of the tables in my office and also from leaning on or over any desks to talk to co-workers because both [the female Corporals] had complained to the supervisors that this constituted “sexual behaviour” in the workplace. ...
I was subjected to this ongoing harassment in so many ways on a daily basis. It was common practice for me to hide in the female toilets on a daily basis and cry because of the abuse I was being subjected to. ...

[In the early 2000s] there was an incident with [a Leading Aircraftman] ... where he attempted to physically assault and intimidate me whilst at his graduation function off [the base]. ... On the way to the [Graduation drinks] [the Leading Aircraftman] and other members of his course engaged in behaviour which was not acceptable including urinating in the public mall in broad daylight and throwing shoes and other paraphernalia onto shop roofs. When the students including [the Leading Aircraftman] arrived at [the bar] I confronted them about their behaviour. At which time [the Leading Aircraftman] became extremely aggressive (having become somewhat intoxicated) and began speaking to me in an aggressive and threatening manner. [He] became physically aggressive and entered my personal space by making aggressive motions towards me including putting his face within millimetres from my face threatening me that he could do exactly as he pleased and there was nothing I could do about it. ... As the superior in this instance and in uniform I tried my best to subdue the situation so as not to cause a public scene. I was extremely intimidated and scared. ...

As a result of this incident with [the Leading Aircraftman], I laid multiple charges against him. All charges were upheld and [the Leading Aircraftman] was found guilty. ... [Later, the Leading Aircraftman] was posted two offices down from me in the workplace. I made complaints to supervisors that I did not feel safe and comfortable working with [the Leading Aircraftman] in the same building let alone two offices away from mine. These complaints and concerns were never addressed and were simply dismissed. For the entire period that I worked with [the Leading Aircraftman] being two offices away I would encounter him in the hallways at work where he would deliberately walk as close as possible to me to invade my personal space as a means of intimidating me. I was given no support from my Commanders during this time. ...

I worked in a hostile, dangerous and intimidating environment for 11 years and was not afforded support from my superiors during this time. I was subjected to physical, verbal and sexual assaults. I was intimidated, harassed and bullied in my workplace. I was made to feel worthless and devalued as a human being and when I did attempt to stand up for myself I was never supported and my circumstances only became worse because I did not "toe the line".

I was subsequently medically discharged from the military in [the late 2000s] suffering from a psychological illness. ...

As a result of the sexual assault, harassment, bullying, verbal and physical assaults I have suffered a number of serious mental health disorders including Depression, Anxiety and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. For many years following these incidents I had recurring nightmares, panic attacks, depressed mood and became a heavy alcohol drinker as a way of self-medicating. ...

All the abuse I suffered during my service has impacted on my life in such a negative way that it has changed me as a person for the worst.414

---

2 Above.
3 Above.
7 Above, p 6.


21 Above.

22 In 2011-2012, for example, the average funded strength of the Army Permanent Force was 29 697 people, while for the Navy it was 14 054, and for the Air Force it was 14 243. Department of Defence, Defence Annual Report 2012-13, 2013, viewed 31 October 2014, http://www.defence.gov.au/AnnualReports/12-13/part_three/chapter_six.asp. Since the 1990s, Air Force personnel have accounted for 25 per cent of the ADF Permanent Force. Throughout history this has at times been even greater. For example, in late 1944, the Air Force increased to 182 000 personnel (28 per cent of the ADF) and was the fourth largest air force in the world. At the same time, the Navy comprised around 39 650 personnel (six per cent of the ADF) and the Army had 423 000 personnel (66 per cent of the ADF). Email from Department of Defence Organisational Response Unit (ORU) to the Taskforce, 20 October 2014.


24 Male Cadet, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

25 See, for example, Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

26 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

27 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

28 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

29 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

30 Male Officer Cadet, RAAF Base Point Cook, early 1950s, [Name redacted].

31 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

32 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

33 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

34 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

35 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

36 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

37 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

38 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

39 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

40 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

41 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

42 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
43 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
44 Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].
45 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
46 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
47 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
48 See, for example, Female Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
49 Female Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
50 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
51 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
52 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
53 Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
54 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
55 Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
56 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
57 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].
58 See, for example, Female Trainee, RAAF Base Wagga, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Trainee, RAAF Base Wagga, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
59 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
60 Female Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
61 Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
62 Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 1960s, [Name redacted].
63 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
64 Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].
65 Female Cadet, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, RAAF Base Point Cook, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
66 Female Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Officer Trainee, RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
67 Female Trainee, RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
68 Female Officer Cadet, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
69 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].
70 Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
71 Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
72 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
73 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
74 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
75 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].
76 Female Recruit, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
77 Female Trainee, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
78 Female Officer Cadet, RAAF Base Point Cook, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
79 Female Trainee, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Trainee, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
80 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].
81 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
82 Female Officer Cadet, RAAF Point Cook, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
83 Female Trainee, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
84 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
18. COMPLAINTS OF ABUSE IN THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

130 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
131 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
132 Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
133 Male Trainee, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
134 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
135 Female Trainee, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
136 Female Officer Cadet, RAAF Base Williams, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
137 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
138 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
139 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].
140 Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
141 Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
142 Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
143 Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted].
144 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
145 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
146 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
147 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
148 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
149 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
150 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
151 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
152 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
153 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
154 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
155 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
156 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
157 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
158 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
159 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
160 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
161 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
162 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
163 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
164 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
165 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
166 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
167 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
168 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
169 Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
170 Female Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
171 See, for example, Female Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Trainee, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
172 Female Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
173 Female Recruit, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
174 Female Recruit, RAAF Edinburgh, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Trainee, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
175 Female Trainee, RAAF Base Laverton, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Trainee, RAAF Base Point Cook, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Female Trainee, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftman, RAAF Base Point Cook, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftman, RAAF Base Laverton, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Lieutenant Commander, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftman, RAAF Base Laverton, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftman, RAAF Base Laverton, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftman, RAAF Base Laverton, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftman, [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Leading Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Richmond, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Point Cook, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Female Corporal, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Laverton, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
216 Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

217 Female [Rank redacted], RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

218 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Point Cook, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

219 Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].

220 Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

221 Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

222 Female [Rank redacted], RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

223 Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Point Cook, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

224 Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Point Cook, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

225 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

226 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

227 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

228 Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

229 Female [Rank redacted], RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

230 Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

231 Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].

232 See, for example, Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Point Cook, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

233 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

234 Female Corporal, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].

235 Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

236 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

237 Female Corporal, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

238 Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

239 Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

240 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Squadron Leader, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Flight Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

241 Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

242 Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Flight Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Squadron Leader, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

243 Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

244 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

245 Aircraftman, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

246 Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

247 Male Private, RAAF Base Laverton, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

248 Male [Rank redacted], Location redacted, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftwoman, Location redacted, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

249 Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

250 Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

251 Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Flight Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Squadron Leader, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

252 Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

253 Aircraftman, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

254 Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

255 Aircraftman, Location redacted, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

256 Leading Aircraftwoman, Location redacted, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

257 Leading Aircraftwoman, Location redacted, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

258
259 Male Flight Sergeant, RAAF Base Richmond, early 1960s, [Name redacted].
260 Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
261 Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
262 See Female [Rank redacted], RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
263 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Laverton, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
264 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Point Cook, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
265 Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
266 Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
267 Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Richmond, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
268 Aircraftman, RAAF Base Point Cook, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
269 See, for example, Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Sergeant, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Flight Lieutenant, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
270 Female Pilot Officer, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
271 Male Corporal, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
272 Male Warrant Officer, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
273 See, for example, Female Flight Officer, RAAF Base Richmond, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Richmond, early 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Squadron Leader, RAAF Base Laverton, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
274 Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
275 Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Sergeant, RAAF Base Amberley, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
276 Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
277 Male Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
278 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Richmond, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Flight Sergeant, RAAF Base Richmond, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
279 Male Corporal, RAAF Base Wagga, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
280 Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
281 Male Private, RAAF Base Laverton, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
282 Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
283 Female [Rank redacted], RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
284 Male Sergeant, RAAF Base Richmond, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
285 Female [Rank redacted], RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
286 Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
287 Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].
288 Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Sergeant, RAAF Base Laverton, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
289 Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Point Cook, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
290 Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
291 Male Squadron Leader, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
292 Male [Rank redacted], RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
293 Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
294 Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
295 Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
296 Female [Rank redacted], RAAF Base Williamtown, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
297 Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
298 Male Sergeant, RAAF Base Richmond, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
299 Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], 1970s, [Name redacted].
300 Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Richmond, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
301 Male Corporal, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Richmond, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Richmond, early 1960s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Sergeant, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Richmond, early 1960s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female Sergeant, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Laverton, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Corporal, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Richmond, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Richmond, early 1960s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female Sergeant, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Corporal, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Corporal, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Laverton, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Sergeant, RAAF Base Amberley, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Squadron Leader, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Corporal, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Laverton, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female Corporal, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Sergeant, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Wagga, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Wagga, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Trainee, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Female Trainee, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], RAAF Base Wagga, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
Female Trainee, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Trainee, RAAF Base Wagga, 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Trainee, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Trainee, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].


Female Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Female Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female Officer Cadet, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
See, for example, Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Flight Sergeant, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

19.1 Overview of complaints of abuse in Defence between 2000 and 2011

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 2224 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse experienced by more than 1650 complainants during their time in Defence. This includes 476 cases of abuse that occurred between 2000 and the Taskforce cut-off date of 11 April 2011.

It is important to note that the Taskforce has categorised the abuse experienced by each complainant as forming one or more ‘cases’ of abuse. Many complainants experienced multiple cases of abuse. One case generally relates to abuse experienced at one location (occasionally abuse experienced over a number of locations may be classed as one case of abuse if it is part of an ongoing campaign of abuse). The statistical information provided below is based on the number of cases of abuse in Defence between 2000 and 2011. The discussion of abuse throughout this section generally refers to the number of complainants, or individuals, who experienced a particular type or form of abuse in Defence during the 2000s.

The analysis of abuse reported to have occurred in Defence between 2000 and 2011 is based on a close review of all complaints which raised at least one plausible allegation of abuse. The Taskforce has undertaken a close review of all complaints of abuse during this time period in order to draw particular attention to the practices and behaviours which are currently occurring within the three primary Defence services. This includes abuse that has occurred in: the Navy (122 complainants), the Army (156 complainants), and the Air Force (79 complainants). The Taskforce also received complaints regarding abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011 in the Department of Defence (considered in section 20 below) and at the Australian Defence Force Academy (considered in the separate Taskforce Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy). The Taskforce received some complaints of abuse that occurred while complainants were undertaking initial recruit and employment training, and many complaints of abuse that occurred while complainants were engaged in regular Navy, Army, and Air Force service.

From complaints received by the Taskforce, it appears that the Navy is the service with the highest incidence of abuse, accounting for almost 30 per cent of all cases of abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011, even though it currently comprises only 25 per cent of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Permanent Forces.¹ Though the Taskforce received the highest number of complaints of abuse in the Army between 2000 and 2011, both the Army and the Air Force were under-represented in complaints of abuse over this time period as compared to their numbers of personnel. There were some differences in the most prevalent forms of abuse within each of the services, including a high number of complaints of sexual abuse and sexual harassment in the Navy, high rates of physical abuse in the Army, and high rates of harassment and bullying in both the Army and the Air Force.

The review of these complaints has raised some notable and concerning issues regarding the nature of abuse within Defence in recent years. In most complaints of abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011, abuse was carried out by persons of higher rank to the complainant. This includes reports from several complainants within each service who experienced abuse carried out by the same alleged abuser who had developed a reputation for abuse. As in previous decades, most alleged abusers during this time period were male; however the Taskforce received a number of reports of abuse carried out by female alleged abusers, often in complaints of harassment and bullying.

It is particularly noteworthy that abuse during the period 2000 to 2011 was experienced by almost equal numbers of male and female complainants. While women have been overrepresented in complaints of abuse across the entire period considered by the Taskforce, more recent decades have seen an increase in the proportion of women who have experienced abuse while serving in Defence. This suggests the continuance of a particularly discriminatory culture and the perpetuation of negative attitudes towards the participation of women in Defence.
Over the period 2000 to 2011, almost all incidents of sexual abuse were experienced by women. Most complaints of abuse that occurred during initial recruit and employment training over this period involved the sexual abuse of young women, and almost half of all cases of sexual abuse during this time period occurred in the Navy. Complaints of sexual abuse across all three services included sexual assault involving non-consensual intercourse, as well as digital penetration and forced oral sex. A number of complainants experienced particularly violent incidents of sexual assault by their peers and co-workers, including sexual assault by multiple alleged abusers at the same time, or while complainants were in considerable positions of vulnerability, such as while intoxicated or asleep. Other complainants experienced indecent assault in the form of being repeatedly groped on the breasts and buttocks, or filmed or recorded without their consent while in a state of undress.

The number of complaints of sexual harassment in all three services has remained high over recent decades, continuing into the period of 2000 to 2011. It is particularly noteworthy that the abuse experienced by women in more recent decades appears to be more personal and targeted, and in many ways less overt than the forms of sexual harassment exhibited during the 1970s and 1980s when women initially entered the services. Sexual harassment experienced by female complainants over this period took a myriad of forms, including intrusive questions of a sexual nature, indecent exposure, and repeated and unwelcome propositions for sex by supervisors and co-workers. Sexual harassment was often endured over the duration of a complainant’s career, and in many cases was exacerbated after it became known that a complainant made a formal report of sexual abuse to Defence.

Physical abuse was the second most commonly reported form of abuse experienced by complainants between 2000 and 2011, with almost half of these complaints involving physical abuse in the Army. A number of male complainants told the Taskforce of forced participation in initiation rituals and ceremonies upon their entry into regular service, which often involved particularly brutal forms of physical and sexual abuse. Many complainants of both genders also experienced physical abuse in the form of a denial of medical assistance or forced participation in a physically taxing activity while ill or injured.

As in previous decades, harassment and bullying was the most common form of abuse experienced in all three services during this time period. Both male and female complainants reported experiencing ongoing abuse in the form of deliberate and often malicious attempts by supervisors and peers to undermine and sabotage their career progression in Defence, or behaviour intended to isolate complainants within the workforce. The use of technology is also a particular feature of abuse in recent years, in many ways making the abuse more insidious in nature and more likely to occur outside of work hours. This includes harassment and bullying via email, Facebook, or other forms of social media. The Taskforce is particularly concerned about the extent of harassment and bullying in all three services in Defence.

The sections below provide a summary of the main types and forms of abuse reported to the Taskforce by complainants who served in Defence over the period 2000 to 2011, including:

- a statistical overview of abuse in Defence between 2000 and 2011;
- complaints of abuse in the Navy between 2000 and 2011;
- complaints of abuse in the Army between 2000 and 2011; and
19.2 Statistical overview of complaints of abuse in Defence between 2000 and 2011

(a) Abuse by service between 2000 and 2011

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 476 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse occurring between 2000 and 2011. Of these:

- 147 cases related to abuse in the Navy (31 per cent of all cases of abuse occurring between 2000 and 2011);
- 182 cases related to abuse in the Army (38 per cent of cases);
- 89 cases related to abuse in the Air Force (19 per cent of cases);
- 15 cases related to abuse in the Australian Defence Force Academy (three per cent of cases); and
- 43 cases related to abuse of Australian Public Service (APS) employees in Defence (nine per cent of cases).

As with cases relating to abuse over the whole time period considered by the Taskforce, the Navy was overrepresented among cases of abuse occurring between 2000 and 2011, compared to its total numbers of personnel. Navy cases accounted for 35 per cent of all cases relating to abuse that occurred in the Navy, Army or Air Force between 2000 and 2011, while making up only approximately 25 per cent of all personnel in the ADF Permanent Forces. Both the Army and the Air Force were under-represented in complaints of abuse compared to their total numbers of personnel. The Army accounted for 44 per cent of all cases of abuse that occurred within the three services between 2000 and 2011, while making up approximately 50 per cent of all personnel in the ADF Permanent Forces. The Air Force accounted for 21 per cent of all cases of abuse that occurred within the three services between 2000 and 2011, while making up approximately 25 per cent of all personnel in the ADF Permanent Forces.

Graph 42: Cases by service between 2000 and 2011

(b) Sex of complainants between 2000 and 2011

For abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011, men were the complainants in 56 per cent of cases (265 cases), and women were the complainants in 44 per cent of cases (211 cases). This is a significant overrepresentation of women given that women comprised just 14 per cent of all ADF personnel in 2010–2011.2
Women were equally represented as complainants in each of the services between 2000 and 2011, when taking into account the lower percentage of women that serve in the Army compared to the Navy and Air Force. In 2010–2011, women made up 19 per cent of Navy personnel, 10 per cent of Army personnel, and 17 per cent of Air Force personnel.3 Of cases relating to abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011:

- women were the complainants in 46 per cent of Navy cases (67 cases), while men were the complainants in 54 per cent of Navy cases (80 cases);
- women were the complainants in 39 per cent of Army cases (71 cases), while men were the complainants in 61 per cent of Army cases (111 cases); and
- women were the complainants in 43 per cent of Air Force cases (38 cases), while men were the complainants in 57 per cent of Air Force cases (51 cases).

Graph 43: Percentage of men and women as complainants in each service between 2000 and 2011

(c) Types of abuse between 2000 and 2011

In the period between 2000 and 2011, levels of sexual abuse and physical abuse were significantly lower than during earlier time periods, as shown in the graph below. Harassment and bullying was significantly more prominent and sexual harassment marginally so. Of cases relating to abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011:

- 23 per cent of cases involved sexual abuse, compared with 42 per cent of cases relating to abuse that occurred between 1942 and 1999;
- 18 per cent of cases involved sexual harassment, compared with 17 per cent of cases relating to abuse that occurred between 1942 and 1999;
- 27 per cent of cases involved physical abuse, compared with 54 per cent of cases relating to abuse that occurred between 1942 and 1999; and
- 79 per cent of cases involved harassment and bullying, compared with 62 per cent of cases relating to abuse that occurred between 1942 and 1999.
In the period between 2000 and 2011, the highest number of cases of sexual abuse and sexual harassment related to the Navy, rather than the Army or Air Force. The highest number of cases of physical abuse and harassment and bullying, on the other hand, related to the Army:

- 44 per cent of sexual abuse cases related to abuse in the Navy (47 out of 108 cases), 30 per cent related to the Army (32 cases), and 16 per cent related to the Air Force (17 cases);
- 37 per cent of sexual harassment cases related to abuse in the Navy (32 out of 87 cases), 30 per cent related to the Army (26 cases), and 18 per cent related to the Air Force (16 cases);
- 26 per cent of physical abuse cases related to abuse in the Navy (33 out of 129 cases), 45 per cent related to the Army (58 cases), and 18 per cent related to the Air Force (23 cases); and
- 27 per cent of harassment and bullying cases related to abuse in the Navy (100 out of 376 cases), 39 per cent related to the Army (146 cases), and 20 per cent related to the Air Force (77 cases).
In the period between 2000 and 2011, sexual abuse and sexual harassment were most common in cases involving Navy complainants, physical abuse was most common in cases involving Army complainants, and harassment and bullying was most common in cases involving Air Force complainants:

- 32 per cent of Navy cases involved sexual abuse, compared to 18 per cent of Army cases, and 19 per cent of Air Force cases;
- 22 per cent of Navy cases involved sexual harassment, compared to 14 per cent of Army cases, and 18 per cent of Air Force cases;
- 22 per cent of Navy cases involved physical abuse, compared to 32 per cent of Army cases, and 26 per cent of Air Force cases; and
- 68 per cent of Navy cases involved harassment and bullying, compared to 80 per cent of Army cases, and 87 per cent of Air Force cases.

Women were overrepresented as complainants for every type of abuse, but overwhelmingly so for sexual abuse and sexual harassment:

- women were the complainants in 79 per cent of sexual abuse cases (74 per cent of Navy cases, 88 per cent of Army cases, and 82 per cent of Air Force cases), despite currently making up approximately 14 per cent of all ADF personnel, while men were the complainants in 21 per cent of sexual abuse cases (26 per cent of Navy cases, 13 per cent of Army cases, and 18 per cent of Air Force cases), despite making up approximately 86 per cent of all ADF personnel;
- women were the complainants in 80 per cent of sexual harassment cases (72 per cent of Navy cases, 88 per cent of Army cases, and 88 per cent of Air Force cases), while men were the complainants in 20 per cent of sexual harassment cases (28 per cent of Navy cases, 12 per cent of Army cases, and 13 per cent of Air Force cases);
- women were the complainants in 29 per cent of physical abuse cases (24 per cent of Navy cases, 19 per cent of Army cases, and 35 per cent of Air Force cases), while men were the complainants in 71 per cent of physical abuse cases (76 per cent of Navy cases, 81 per cent of Air Force cases, and 65 per cent of Air Force cases); and
- women were the complainants in 38 per cent of harassment and bullying cases (36 per cent of Navy cases, 33 per cent of Army cases, and 35 per cent of Air Force cases), while men were the complainants in 62 per cent of harassment and bullying cases (64 per cent of Navy cases, 67 per cent of Army cases, and 65 per cent of Air Force cases).
Graph 47: Percentage of cases involving women and men as complainants between 2000 and 2011

### 19.3 Complaints of abuse in the Navy between 2000 and 2011

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 861 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse experienced by more than 650 complainants in the Navy. This includes 147 cases of abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011, experienced by 122 complainants.

It is important to note that the Taskforce has categorised the abuse experienced by each complainant as forming one or more ‘cases’ of abuse. Many complainants experienced multiple cases of abuse. One case generally relates to abuse experienced at one location (occasionally abuse experienced over a number of locations may be classed as one case of abuse if it is part of an ongoing campaign of abuse). The statistical information provided below is based on the number of cases of abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011 in the Navy. The discussion of abuse throughout this section generally refers to the number of complainants, or individuals, who experienced a particular type or form of abuse during 2000 and 2011 in the Navy.

The Taskforce received complaints of abuse in the Navy experienced by almost equal numbers of male and female complainants between 2000 and 2011. Harassment and bullying was the most commonly experienced form of abuse during this period (85 complainants), followed by sexual abuse (43 complainants), sexual harassment (30 complainants), and physical abuse (27 complainants).

A significant number of complainants who experienced abuse during this period were of relatively junior rank at the time of the abuse (approximately 69 complainants were either recruits, or of Seaman or Able Seaman rank). Of the 20 complainants who were in initial training when they experienced the abuse, the majority were female complainants (14 complainants). Most alleged abusers were identified as being of a more senior rank to the complainant at the time of the abuse (107 complainants). In the remaining cases, alleged abusers were identified as being of equivalent rank to complainants at the time of the abuse (15 complainants).

In over half of the complaints of abuse during this period, the abuse was carried out by multiple alleged abusers (69 complainants). In the overwhelming majority of complaints, alleged abusers were male (97 complainants). Some complainants reported abuse that involved both male and female alleged abusers (21 complainants), and a small number of complainants experienced abuse carried out by female alleged abusers (four complainants).
A number of complainants told the Taskforce of having been subjected to abuse across numerous locations during their time in the Navy (22 complainants), with six of these complainants having experienced abuse at more than three locations, including serious acts of sexual and physical abuse. Complainants also told the Taskforce about experiences of abuse following them, such as being subjected to similar abuse at multiple locations, being abused by the same alleged abusers across locations, and experiencing ongoing abuse after negative information was disseminated about them from one location to another.

The following sections provide a summary of the main types of abuse experienced by complainants in the Navy between 2000 and 2011.

(a) Sexual abuse in the Navy between 2000 and 2011

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 379 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual abuse within the Navy (44 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Navy).

Of the 122 complainants who experienced abuse in the Navy between 2000 and 2011, 43 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual abuse (35 per cent of Navy complaints between 2000 and 2011). The majority of these complainants were female (32 female complainants). A number of complainants were sexually abused while they were undergoing initial recruit and employment training. Most cases of sexual abuse involved individual alleged abusers (33 complainants), and nearly all alleged abusers were male (42 complainants).

The nature of the sexual abuse experienced by complainants in the Navy between 2000 and 2011 is discussed below, including sexual assault, indecent assault, as well as other forms of sexual abuse.

(i) Sexual assault

The first part involved touching of my genitals outside my clothes, rubbing and grabbing of my thigh and touching my chest and back under the clothes ... and ended up with the respondent stating out loud that he wanted a blow job. The second part that occurred outside the accommodation block included various forms of penetration without consent whilst being restrained by the respondent’s belt around my neck. ... [It] occurred in a context of a contest between some of the course members to “sleep” with all women on the course. ... Monetary values were indicated to me during the second part of my incident. A

Sexual assault was the most commonly reported form of sexual abuse experienced by complainants in the Navy between 2000 and 2011. Of the 43 complainants who experienced sexual abuse during this time period, more than half reported being subjected to sexual assault (24 complainants), and the majority of these complainants were female (19 complainants). Most complainants told the Taskforce of having experienced an isolated incident of sexual assault. The types of sexual assault reported by complainants included non-consensual anal and vaginal penetration. This included penetration by an alleged abuser’s penis, digital penetration, and penetration with an object. Complainants also reported being forced to give and receive oral sex.

All of the alleged abusers in these cases were male and in most cases, held a higher rank to the complainant. Most of the complainants who reported being sexually assaulted were in regular service at the time of the abuse (18 complainants), though some complainants experienced the abuse while undertaking initial training. As in earlier decades, most complainants were relatively young, aged less than 25 years of age, and a significant proportion aged less than 21 years of age, at the time of the abuse.

In many cases, the sexual assault occurred while the complainant was in a position of significant vulnerability, such as while asleep or intoxicated. In more than half of the complaints of sexual assault reported to the Taskforce, complainants described waking up to find that they were being sexually assaulted (14 complainants). Some complainants reported engaging in unsuccessful attempts to resist the sexual assault. For example, one complainant who served in the early 2000s told the Taskforce:
At the end of the night, about midnight, we went back to [the Leading Seaman’s] place (as his friends would be staying at the house because of the distance to base). When we arrived at his house, I was confronted with a scenario where the three men faced me and [the Leading Seaman] said, “so where are you going to sleep tonight”. ... I told [the Leading Seaman] that I would share a bed with him [as he was the only male that I knew] and told him that we were ONLY sharing the bed. I went to bed fully dressed. While I was trying to go to sleep [he] kept making advances towards me and I kept saying “no”. However, he would not take no for an answer. He kept making advances and I kept physically pushing him away and saying no but he wouldn’t stop. He was bigger than me and he kept forcing himself on me. He removed some of my clothing. I could not fight him any more so I turned my head away while he raped me.10

A number of reports of sexual assault received by the Taskforce involved the consumption of alcohol (14 complainants). This included several complainants who were considerably intoxicated at the time of the sexual assault,11 for example, falling in and out of consciousness due to their state of inebriation.12 Other complainants told the Taskforce that the alleged abuser was intoxicated at the time of the sexual assault.13

Some complainants told the Taskforce that their drink was spiked prior to the incident of sexual assault.14 In these cases, complainants reported having been out socialising with their peers and subsequently ‘feeling ill’ or unwell, causing them to return to their accommodation, often with the assistance of others. Complainants then described waking up to find an alleged abuser sexually assaulting them. One complainant told the Taskforce of a sexual assault that occurred in the early 2000s, while a number of other people were present and observing the assault:

[They] took me to a room, they gave me a drink why I took it is beyond me, I guess being new at sea, I thought this does not happen in Navy ... boy was I so wrong ... I swear to this day I was drugged. ... I sort of blacked out, but I came to. I felt one of the guys trying to enter my vagina. The other wacking off. I was completely out of it. ... Then they swapped over. I then said no ... no I don’t want this. They got off me, but yet then entered me and I did not want it at all. That killed me, my light went out. ... I was sore very sore but too embarrassed to say a thing.15

In a number of cases, complainants knew the alleged abuser and had been socialising with them prior to the sexual assault,16 with some complainants having actively resisted an alleged abuser’s previous sexual advances prior to the sexual assault.17

A number of complainants described being subjected to particularly violent sexual assaults in which they were pushed or repeatedly kicked, causing bruising and bleeding.18 Complainants reported having been physically assaulted before, during and after an incident of sexual assault. In one case, a complainant described being subjected to ‘various forms of penetration’ while having a belt wrapped around her throat, and being punched, kicked and threatened.19 Another complainant told the Taskforce that in the late 2000s:

As a joke, one of my mates “hog tied” me, which means that you are face down with your hands and feet in the same tie and bound behind your back. At this point [the Petty Officer] walked into the cabin. ... [The Petty Officer] walked towards me and he then proceeded to pull down my boxer shorts. I did not know what to think and was extremely scared at this point as I had heard rumours that [the Petty Officer] was known to engage in abusive behaviours. After pulling my shorts down, [the Petty Officer] then inserted his fingers into my anus before pulling them out and ripping [at my face] with the same fingers. This resulted in [an injury to my face] ... causing severe bleeding.20

(ii) Indecent assault

[My direct supervisor] grabbed my breasts whilst handing me lifejackets. When I yelled at him and threatened to take the matter further he taunted me ... in front of other sailors. ...

Whilst sitting in a completely dark compartment [a Leading Seaman] stated that he could have a wank and that he was playing with himself at that time. He asked me to touch his penis, after refusing he grabbed my hand to make me do it, saying “c’mon, have a tug on this, it’s dark, no-one will see, no-one will know”. ... I successfully pulled away and told him I would never touch his penis. When the lights came on, he had his shaved genitals exposed and said “see, I maintain”. His penis was erect at the time.21
Many complainants reported being subjected to indecent assault while serving in the Navy between 2000 and 2011 (24 complainants), often on more than one occasion. For some complainants, this form of abuse continued over a period of several months or years. The Taskforce received reports from both male and female complainants who experienced inappropriate touching and fondling, as well as a number of female complainants who reported being kissed without their consent.

Many complainants told the Taskforce of experiencing indecent assault in the workplace, during official hours and often witnessed by others. In some cases, the indecent assaults were carried out by their immediate supervisors. Complainants described having their genital region fondled while in a vulnerable position, such as while bending or kneeling down. Other complainants reported being rubbed against and having their breasts ‘groped’ and ‘jabbed’. Some complainants told the Taskforce of waking up in their cabins to find an alleged abuser touching or kissing their genitals and breasts.

A number of complainants were subjected to inappropriate touching on a daily basis by the same alleged abuser, which included touching of the breasts, buttocks and groin. For example, one complainant who served in the Navy during the late 2000s told the Taskforce:

> Whilst working in the galley alone, [the Petty Officer] would come up behind me and reach around my body from behind and brush past my breast, this happened on quite a lot of occasions. He would do it in such a way that you would be questioning yourself on what just happened.

Other complainants reported being indecently assaulted at work functions in full view of others. This included five complainants who were subjected to uninvited kissing. Some complainants also reported being touched on the breasts, in one case by a Lieutenant Commander, and having hands put down their underwear.

### (iii) Other forms of sexual abuse

The Taskforce received reports of a number of other forms of sexual abuse. For example, several complainants reported having been sexually abused during initiation ceremonies on particular bases or while serving on ships in the Navy’s fleet (as discussed in section 16.6).

In addition to these complaints, one complainant experienced sexual abuse in the form of having been photographed in the shower during the late 2000s:

> I continued towards the communal bathroom which at the time, I did not realise that the showers were combined sexes. I chose the shower second from the end and closed the cubicle door behind me. I turned the water in the shower on, waited for the water to warm and stood under. Whilst I was standing under the water oblivious to anything surrounding, I began to wash my body and face, at which point I looked up and saw a man’s hand and a camera to my left above the cubicle. I took a second glance and then screamed in horror, “what the fuck.” I stood there in complete shock. The hand immediately disappeared. I did not hear a sound or see anything else.

My heart was racing and I felt panicky. Standing there, too concerned to walk out the door, as at the time believing the man could still have been there in the next cubicle. Fearing for my safety and worried that I could be physically or sexually attacked. I worked up the courage to run out of the cubicle.

### (b) Sexual harassment in the Navy between 2000 and 2011

[A superior officer] took an interest in me when I returned to the wardroom. … His interests were always in a sexual nature. He would make crude sexual remarks. … I would feel uncomfortable but I would brush them off. I felt working at the wardroom was a real "boys club". We just had to take the abuse as if we didn’t we would be treated like crap.

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 147 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual harassment within the Navy (17 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Navy).

Of the 122 complainants who experienced abuse in the Navy between 2000 and 2011, 30 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual harassment (25 per cent of Navy complaints between 2000 and 2011). This included 21 female complainants and nine male complainants.
Despite the relatively low incidence of sexual harassment complaints to the Taskforce, this type of abuse is likely to have been much more prevalent within the Navy than is indicated by the statistics for a number of reasons. This is largely because many complaints of sexual abuse may have included behaviour that could also have been categorised as sexual harassment.

Nonetheless, sexual harassment featured prominently in accounts of abuse in the Navy during the period 2000 to 2011. Complainants told the Taskforce of being subjected to sexist language, unwelcome sexual advances and propositions for sex, rumours and sexual innuendo, harassment after reporting sexual abuse, and indecent exposure. In a significant number of complaints, abuse was carried out by members of the Navy holding a superior rank to complainants, including Petty Officers, Chief Petty Officers and Lieutenants. Some complainants identified the same alleged abuser as responsible for the abuse of a number of individuals over this period of time.


Other complainants told the Taskforce of frequent requests to engage in sexually suggestive behaviour, including having their underwear forcibly displayed in a public area, and being asked to bend over simply for the gratification of a member of superior rank. Some complainants reported that they were subjected to indecent exposure from their colleagues and members of superior rank, which included ‘full frontal flashing’. Other complainants described more explicit requests by fellow members of the Navy, such as being asked whether they ‘want to fuck on the boat’, asked to touch another person’s testicles, and one complainant who reported that after enquiring about a promotion, she was told by a superior officer that she ‘must not be blowing the right people and that we would have a closed door session to get (her) promoted sooner’.

A number of complainants told Taskforce that they were repeatedly ‘interrogated about personal sexual details’ and were the subject of malicious rumours and sexual innuendo, such as rumours that they were open to having sex with members of a ship’s company.

The Taskforce received a number of reports from complainants who were sexually harassed after they made a formal report to Defence about a sexual assault, often being labelled a ‘slut’. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce she was told ‘let me guess he orgasmed first ... so you cried rape’.

A number of male complainants also told the Taskforce of being subjected to sexually explicit comments and remarks by higher ranking members of the Navy, mostly involving propositions for oral sex, such as being told ‘you want my cock in your mouth’, or to ‘suck my cock’.

[c] Physical abuse in the Navy between 2000 and 2011

At first [the Leading Seaman] was nice to me but soon thereafter he became aggressive towards me for reasons I do not know. By aggressive I mean putting his fist up to my face and verbally abusing me. ... The abuse was often and unwarranted, it was not unusual to be threatened by [the Leading Seaman] five to 10 times everyday I was onboard. ... I [was] picked up by my neck and grabbed on my arm on several occasions.

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 464 cases as raising plausible allegations of physical abuse within the Navy (54 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Navy).

As compared with earlier decades, the Taskforce received fewer reports of physical abuse in the Navy between 2000 and 2011. Of the 122 complainants who experienced abuse in the Navy between 2000 and 2011, a total of 27 complainants reported having been subjected to some form of physical abuse (22 per cent of Navy complaints between 2000 and 2011). Most of these complaints involved an isolated incident of abuse carried out by a male alleged abuser, often holding a higher rank or in a position of authority to the complainant at the time of the abuse.
The nature of the physical abuse experienced by complainants in the Navy between 2000 and 2011 is discussed below, including physical assault, and physical abuse carried out during initiation rituals.

(i) Physical assault

Of the complainants who reported experiencing physical abuse in the Navy during the period 2000 to 2011, at least 10 complainants were physically assaulted in the workplace during official working hours, often during supervised training exercises, and typically in view of others.

Complainants told the Taskforce of being ‘grabbed’ and ‘slammed’, ‘struck’ on the head requiring stitches, and punched. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce of being threatened, ‘picked up by my neck and grabbed on my arm on several occasions’.

A number of complainants were physically abused by more senior ranking members of the Navy, including the ranks of Leading Seaman, Petty Officer, Chief Petty Officer and Lieutenant Commander. In a very recent example during the late 2000s, a complainant told the Taskforce that she was physically assaulted during a training session by one of the Petty Officers responsible for supervision of the session.

(ii) Physical abuse during initiation rituals

The Taskforce received reports from 10 complainants who were subjected to physical abuse in the context of initiation rituals (described in section 16.5(c) (iv) above), with the majority of these complainants having experienced this type of abuse at HMAS Stirling (described in section 16.6(b) above).

(d) Harassment and bullying in the Navy between 2000 and 2011

Each day at sea I would work for roughly 17-19hrs. Due to not having any sleep and having anxiety about falling asleep on watch/picket, I told [the Petty Officer] that I was exhausted, he replied that I should sort it out myself and to “fuck off”. I later purchased a box of caffeine pills … and started taking them during a 20hr day, this lead to me having a black out after watch/picket in the shower. I had to be placed on a drip for two days and be monitored by the medics.

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 539 cases as raising plausible allegations of harassment and bullying within the Navy (63 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Navy).

A significant number of complainants experienced harassment and bullying in the Navy in recent years. Of the 122 complainants who experienced abuse in the Navy between 2000 and 2011, a total of 85 complainants reported having been subjected to harassment and bullying (70 per cent of Navy complaints between 2000 and 2011). Complainants reported being subjected to many forms of harassment and bullying during this time period. Most incidents of harassment and bullying were carried out by members of higher rank, including instructors and supervisors. A significant number of complainants reported having been harassed and bullied by senior officers, including those holding the rank of Commander or Lieutenant Commander.

The nature of the harassment and bullying experienced by complainants in the Navy between 2000 and 2011 is discussed below. This includes verbal abuse, unreasonable tasks and demands, acts intended to undermine or exclude, loss of entitlements, and harassment and bullying in relation to illness or injury.

(i) Verbal abuse

Verbal abuse was one of the most prevalent forms of harassment and bullying reported to the Taskforce. Complainants described being subjected to derogatory and belittling behaviour carried out by their peers and superiors, including being berated, joked about, put down, and ‘humiliated’. Many complainants told the Taskforce of experiencing verbal abuse and often baseless criticism that directly attacked their credibility by undermining their competence and trustworthiness.
Many complainants told the Taskforce that the verbal abuse frequently occurred in view of others and in many cases was carried out by higher ranking personnel. Some complainants described particularly distressing experiences in which obscene and insulting language was used, such as being referred to as ‘fat cunts’ and ‘lazy fuckers’, and the delivery was aggressive and loud. One complainant was yelled at from such a close proximity that the spit from the alleged abuser’s mouth fell on his face. Other complainants told the Taskforce of having been verbally threatened with physical violence. One complainant told the Taskforce that he was threatened with charges if he reported the abusive conduct of a higher ranking member of the Navy. Other complainants told the Taskforce of the harassment and bullying being so severe that they were too scared to make a formal report of abuse to Defence.74

Some complainants told the Taskforce that they were targeted for verbal abuse because of their sexuality, and reported being subjected to derogatory comments about their lifestyle choices and sexual orientation. Complainants reported that higher ranking members of the Navy remarked that their lifestyle was ‘destructive’, and that they were called a ‘poof’ and ‘faggot’. One complainant told the Taskforce that a colleague suggested they should ‘bash some gays’. In some cases, the ridicule was very public, with one complainant reporting that it was ‘reflective of a general culture’ within the Navy.

Many female complainants also reported being subjected to sexist remarks and sexualised comments (as discussed in section 19.3(b) above).

(ii) Unreasonable tasks and demands

Many complainants who experienced abuse in the Navy between 2000 and 2011 reported that they were required to complete unreasonable tasks or demands by supervisors or members of higher rank. Complainants told the Taskforce of being required to work to the point of fatigue, being assigned ‘demeaning’, ‘meaningless’, and extra tasks, and being made to redo tasks already completed without being offered a reasonable explanation.

Other complainants reported being assigned one task and then immediately assigned another task, making it difficult to complete both, or being made to work up to 20 hours per day.

(iii) Acts intended to undermine or exclude

The Taskforce heard from a number of complainants who experienced harassment and bullying over the period 2000 to 2011 in the form of being undermined, ostracised or deliberately excluded. A number of complainants reported that they were singled out from others, or alternatively isolated from team tasks or other group activities. Some complainants told the Taskforce that their supervisors, in their absence, would discuss their behaviour in a disrespectful manner with other members of staff.

In a number of complaints, the harassment and bullying intensified after a complainant made a formal report to Defence regarding the misconduct they experienced. Complainants also reported being marginalised after making a formal complaint, particularly after lodging a redress of grievance or approaching someone in their chain of command. Complainants told the Taskforce of being shunned, isolated and ostracised, being called a ‘troublemaker’, and their life being made a ‘living hell’, with methods adopted to obstruct their career progression, restrict future training opportunities and negatively impact on their overall career advancement in the Navy.

(iv) Loss of entitlements

A more insidious form of harassment and bullying experienced by several complainants involved the unreasonable denial of entitlements. A number of complainants told the Taskforce that they were threatened with loss of leave or that their leave was refused or revoked without a reasonable explanation. For example, one complainant who served in the late 2000s told the Taskforce of being denied leave to assist with caring for her family members who had been involved in a serious accident, despite the fact that leave had recently been approved for another staff member in similar circumstances. She described her experiences as follows:
[It became apparent to me that I was not coping and approached [the Lieutenant] to discuss having more time off to help with my parents. ... I knew that [another member], had been given a great deal of time off following a family situation. [The Lieutenant’s] response was that I did not need any more time, and that if I requested leave he would not approve it. I continued on with the course as I did not feel I had any choice, although I did not feel I was coping well with my parents being so ill, and I was quite stressed. I was not comfortable speaking to the Commanding Officer, [the Lieutenant Commander] either, as he had little time for “personal issues”.

Another complainant who served in the late 2000s told the Taskforce that she had applied for leave well in advance of an upcoming surgical procedure to ensure that arrangements had been made to care for her children. Despite this, her approved leave was refused a few days prior to the appointment. She told the Taskforce:

A couple of days prior to my surgery he called me into his office and told me that he cancelled my surgery for another date, asking why, he said that I was required to work a function as I apparently was overheard telling another work mate that I told her to have it done on the same day just to get out of working the function. I told him ... in no way was anything mentioned about trying to get out of working the functions. Even though he said a month earlier that he had more than enough people to work that day in fact he had too many. I told him that it was organised around my partner’s leave so he could look after me and our son. He said that he didn’t care.

I worked that function and was standing around most of the day because there were too many people working it. He had no right to cancel my surgery without discussing it with me first but no, he did it all behind my back and made it clear that he was out to make my life difficult.

(v) Harassment and bullying related to illness or injury

A number of complainants told the Taskforce that they were accused of faking either a mental illness or physical health problem. Complainants described how health issues were viewed as a form of weakness, and members of the Navy who were suffering from forms of illness or injury were often labelled a ‘maligner’ and perceived as a burden, or told they were ‘broken’, ‘useless’, and undeserving of their rank. Many complainants reported that these negative labels would be perpetuated by the spreading of rumours around base, which challenged the veracity of their ailments and their ongoing suitability for service.

From the complaints received by the Taskforce, it appears that instead of accommodating their condition, several members of the Navy actively sought to isolate complainants who were suffering from illness or injury in an effort to force their resignation.

19.4 Complaints of abuse in the Army between 2000 and 2011

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 879 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse experienced by more than 650 complainants in the Army. This includes 182 cases of abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011, experienced by 156 complainants.

It is important to note that the Taskforce has categorised the abuse experienced by each complainant as forming one or more ‘cases’ of abuse. Many complainants experienced multiple cases of abuse. One case generally relates to abuse experienced at one location (occasionally abuse experienced over a number of locations may be classed as one case of abuse if it is part of an ongoing campaign of abuse). The statistical information provided below is based on the number of cases of abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011 in the Army. The discussion of abuse throughout this section generally refers to the number of complainants, or individuals, who experienced a particular type or form of abuse during 2000 and 2011 in the Army.

The Taskforce received complaints of abuse in the Army experienced by 96 male complainants and 60 female complainants between 2000 and 2011. A significant number of complainants were of a relatively junior rank, including 53 complainants who were ranked as Privates, at the time of the abuse. Several complainants experienced abuse while in initial training (18 complainants), the majority of whom were female.
Most complainants experienced abuse carried out by members of the Army of a more senior rank at the time of the abuse (134 complainants). Just over half of all complainants experienced abuse carried out by multiple alleged abusers, and most alleged abusers were male. However, the Taskforce received a number of reports of abuse that involved both male and female alleged abusers (20 complainants), as well as a small number of complainants who experienced abuse carried out by female alleged abusers (11 complainants).

The most commonly reported type of abuse experienced during this period was harassment and bullying (133 complainants), followed by physical abuse (53 complainants), sexual abuse (33 complainants), and sexual harassment (26 complainants).

Alcohol consumption was a common feature in many complaints of abuse during this period, with complainants reporting that the alleged abusers had consumed alcohol prior to the abuse (19 complainants), as well as several complainants reporting that they had consumed alcohol prior to the abuse (14 complainants).

Another significant feature of complaints of abuse in the Army between 2000 and 2011 was the number of complaints involving abuse that occurred while complainants were serving overseas, either on deployment or during training (26 complainants). This includes abuse reported to have occurred in East Timor, as well as Afghanistan, Malaysia, the Solomon Islands, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Papua New Guinea, Iraq, and Tonga.

Most complainants who experienced abuse overseas were men, in circumstances typically involving multiple alleged abusers (16 complainants). The most common types of abuse experienced while complainants were employed overseas were harassment and bullying (24 complainants), followed by physical abuse (12 complainants), sexual abuse, and sexual harassment.

The following sections provide a summary of the main types of abuse experienced by complainants in the Army between 2000 and 2011.

(a) Sexual abuse in the Army between 2000 and 2011

Within the first month [the male Private] knocked on my door while intoxicated. He asked to come in and I let him....[The] conversation went for a few minutes, he then suddenly stated "we should have sex". I stated "no" and he tried to force himself onto me and pulled at my clothing in an attempt to remove it. I fought back and pushed him off me and I stood up and demanded that he leave. He came towards me in a second attempt and I pushed him towards the door and demanded he leave again.¹⁰⁸

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 287 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual abuse within the Army (33 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Army).

Of the 156 complainants who experienced abuse in the Army between 2000 and 2011, 33 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual abuse (21 per cent of Army complaints between 2000 and 2011). Most of these complainants were female (28 complainants).

Several complainants experienced sexual abuse while they were especially young and undergoing initial recruit and employment training (nine complainants). Most incidents of sexual abuse were carried out by individual alleged abusers, and almost all alleged abusers were identified as being male. This included a large number of alleged abusers who were of a more senior rank to the complainant at the time of the abuse. Alcohol consumption by both alleged abusers and complainants appears to have been a significant factor in complaints of sexual abuse.

The nature of the sexual abuse experienced by complainants in the Army between 2000 and 2011 is discussed below, including sexual assault and indecent assault.

(i) Sexual assault

Of the 33 complainants who experienced sexual abuse in the Army between 2000 and 2011, almost half reported incidents of sexual assault, including non-consensual actual or attempted anal and vaginal penetration, digital penetration, or being forced to give or receive oral sex.
Many of these complainants were sexually assaulted while in a particularly vulnerable state. This included sexual assault that occurred while the complainant was drugged or intoxicated, or while complainants were isolated from their peers, for example, sexual assaults which took place in the toilet blocks at night, while complainants were taking a shower, or in an empty office. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

I went out with a group of people to [some nightclubs]. Most of the people in the group were fellow military personnel, although there were some civilians also. I became intoxicated and ended up sharing a taxi home with [a Private]. I passed out in the cab on the way back to barracks. I recall [the Private] coaxing me into his room on base, which was not far away from my room. I passed out on the floor of his room. … I woke up … to find [the Private] raping me. When I woke, he paused but I lost consciousness again. I believe this happened twice more before I finally had the strength to push him off and get up.

The Taskforce also received reports of sexual assault from three male complainants which involved anal penetration with an object, including one case involving anal penetration with a vacuum cleaner hose.

(ii) Indecent assault

Just over half of the complainants who experienced sexual abuse in the Army in the 2000s told the Taskforce of having been subjected to indecent assault. This included inappropriate touching of the buttocks or breasts, and unwelcome kissing or attempts at kissing. For example, one complainant serving in the late 2000s told the Taskforce:

On the day in question, [the Corporal] came into my room on the pretext of just “saying hello”. He closed the door and began to touch me inappropriately. This included sexual touching between my thighs and on my breasts, underneath my clothes, tickling and attempting to kiss me. I pleaded for him to stop but he ignored me. … I am unsure exactly how long this behaviour continued, but I estimate it at a few minutes while I struggled to break free from him. I was unable to overpower or break free from him, as he was approximately 50kg heavier than me. … Once I was free of his hold, I said nothing, but picked up my rifle and ran out of my accommodation.

Many other complaints also involved stripping or nakedness, including attempts to undress complainants, causing partial or complete nakedness.

(b) Sexual harassment in the Army between 2000 and 2011

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 135 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual harassment within the Army (15 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Army).

Of the 156 complainants who experienced abuse in the Army between 2000 and 2011, 26 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual harassment (17 per cent of Army complaints between 2000 and 2011). Almost all of the complainants who experienced sexual harassment were female, many of whom were subjected to ongoing campaigns of sexual harassment, sometimes over a period of several months or years.

Despite the relatively low incidence of sexual harassment complaints to the Taskforce, this type of abuse is likely to have been much more prevalent within the Army than is indicated by the statistics for a number of reasons. This is largely because complaints of sexual abuse may have included behaviour that could also have been categorised as sexual harassment.

A large number of complainants told the Taskforce of unwanted and repeated requests for sex or unwelcome sexual advances. This included banging or knocking on a complainant’s door, being called on the telephone, being asked intrusive questions, and being told to remove items of clothing. For example, one complainant reported:

I was sexually harassed by my Section Commander. … He made physical sexual advances towards me whilst we were alone, he attempted to touch me. He also made several phone calls to me after hours, requesting that I come to his house to be with him as his wife was not home. I never invited his attention and it was very unwanted. I made it clear that I had no interest in him, however he continued to make advances towards me.
Another complainant told the Taskforce of having been ‘subjected to numerous sexual irregularities’ including:

Being sexually harassed by my [superior] (who asked about my sexual life and if I had any partners during a career interview and offered to give me a foot rub after an anniversary dinner).\textsuperscript{128}

One complainant, who was the only female in her troop at the time, was repeatedly exposed to films with pornographic content.\textsuperscript{129} She told the Taskforce:

The sleeping arrangements involved me and three other male soldiers sleeping side by side in stretchers in a tent. It was a frequent practice during this time for the other male soldiers in my troop to watch pornographic films on the laptop that was situated directly in front of my stretcher. Sometimes I would wake up from a sleep and find some of them sitting on my stretcher talking about the film. They would ask me questions such as “would you like it if someone did that to you?” and “have you ever done that?” The other soldiers continued watching pornographic films in front of me until a member of another troop made a complaint.\textsuperscript{130}

A large number of the complainants who experienced sexual harassment reported that they were subjected to sexist verbal abuse and offensive humour. This included inappropriate sexual comments,\textsuperscript{131} jokes about having sex with the complainant,\textsuperscript{132} and jokes of a suggestive nature, such as there being ‘other ways’ to conduct assessments.\textsuperscript{133} Other complainants reported having been referred to in a derogatory way as ‘sheilas’,\textsuperscript{134} or ‘bitch’\textsuperscript{135} and ‘bimbo’.\textsuperscript{136} One complainant told the Taskforce of being exposed to jokes about rape, sodomy, paedophilia and domestic violence:

From his arrival [the Corporal] would have sexually explicit conversations about women on a daily basis. Conversational topics included forced sodomy, intercourse with under-age girls and degrading women sexually. There are some of his specific comments I can recall, which include “if she’s old enough to bleed, she’s old enough to breed” and “hit ‘em before the hair does”, in relation to under-age girls. Once, referring to forced sodomy on women, he said “make em squeal like a pig”. [The Corporal] allowed pornographic material such as magazines and mobile phone videos to be viewed and shared in the workplace. I did object to this several times, but was always laughed at.\textsuperscript{137}

(c) Physical abuse in the Army between 2000 and 2011

I was having a conversation with [a Private]. He became increasingly aggressive towards me until it built up and he put his hands around my throat and attempted to strangle me.\textsuperscript{138}

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 428 cases as raising plausible allegations of physical abuse within the Army (49 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Army).

Physical abuse was the second most commonly reported type of abuse experienced by complainants in the Army between 2000 and 2011. Of the 156 complainants who experienced abuse in the Army between 2000 and 2011, 53 complainants reported having been subjected to physical abuse (34 per cent of Army complaints between 2000 and 2011). Most of the complainants who experienced physical abuse were male, many of whom were of junior rank, such as Privates, at the time of the abuse. Most of the alleged abusers were male, however the Taskforce also received complaints of abuse carried out by female alleged abusers (10 complainants). In most complaints of physical abuse, the abuse was carried out by members of staff or individuals of a more senior rank to the complainant at the time of the abuse.

The nature of the physical abuse experienced by complainants in the Army between 2000 and 2011 is discussed below, including physical assault, physical abuse carried out during initiation rituals, and physical abuse related to illness or injury.

(i) Physical assault

A significant number of complainants reported having experienced physical assault while serving in the Army between 2000 and 2011, most commonly involving having been punched or assaulted as part of group bashing. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

[Two Privates] began to tease and verbally abuse me but I just didn’t pay them any attention. So then [one Private] started to flick his cigarette at me which landed on me. I flicked it off and told him to piss off so then [the other Private] started to do it and I said the same to him. [That Private] then started throwing beer bottles at my head so I got up and left. ...
[The next day I] was invited back over and [they] said that the shit that had happened [the day before] was not going to happen again. Unfortunately I was being lead into a trap. … [A] person I barely knew at the time came out of his way to call me “a piece of shit” and punch me in the face. I was in shock these people soldiers I am meant to work with and get along with not only verbally abused me the night before but lured me back now for physical abuse. … [The Private] hit me a second time dropping me to the ground. I had to make him stop so I hit him as hard as I could in the testicles. After he fell down I stood back up then I was tackled by [other Privates and] they continued to kick and punch me and burn me with their cigarettes. After taking a beating for what felt like a lifetime I ran back to my room.139

Another complainant told the Taskforce of being subjected to a `dock party`:

At the end of the day after parade I was chased by five males. Each male grabbed hold of a limb and my head. Whilst I was fighting back to get away, other members of the Squadron took turns punching, kicking and pulling my hair. Then they carried me to the edge of the dock and threw me into the water. It was an approximate six feet drop to the water. The Squadron stood and laughed at me whilst I was humiliated. Not one soldier offered assistance to me during the assault or after.140

Many complainants also reported that they experienced death threats or threats of beatings,141 including one complainant who reported having had a loaded rifle pointed at him.142

(ii) Physical abuse during initiation rituals

Some complainants experienced physical abuse in the context of hazing or initiation practices soon after their arrival at an Army barracks (eight complainants). These practices typically involved groups of male alleged abusers of a more senior rank. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce of having been forced to participate in a practice involving a risk of significant injury and that those who refused to participate were physically assaulted.143 Other complainants reported that they were forced to consume alcohol as part of an initiation process.144

(iii) Physical abuse related to illness or injury

Many complainants told the Taskforce that they experienced physical abuse related to illness or injury when they were forced to participate in physical activities despite medical restrictions on account of illness or injury [14 complainants]. Some complainants experienced this form of physical abuse on an ongoing basis over a period of years, with one complainant who reported that he was ‘punished and bastardised every single day for being injured’ over a period of three years.145 The same complainant told the Taskforce:

I was subject to about four months of sleep deprivation as part of my punishment for being injured. … This sleep deprivation was the result of doing piquets every night … after my injury, which was justified by the chain of command when it was stated to me, “you don’t do shit anyway, linging [malingering] cunt”. … The abuse I received was not just from the chain of command and the medical staff. Daily, soldiers of all roles and ranks, would treat me as a second class citizen and I would often be threatened with violence if I did not “accept” that I was a “linging faggot”. The abuse was often very public, and I would often suffer through it in front of hundreds of people. It would also happen on [social media].146

Another complainant reported that in the late 2000s, he was made to participate in a field exercise despite being unwell, and was subsequently physically assaulted:

The worst occasion where [the Warrant Officer] abused me was after a field exercise that I was forced to go on by him even though I had a severe chest and sinus infection that I ended up being evacuated from and brought back to the barracks and sent to hospital for surgery. [The Warrant Officer] grabbed me in the hallway … after I had just been released from hospital and continually punched me every time he spoke a word in the following sentence “You-Are-A-Fucken-Stupid-Useless-Loser-Cunt”. He hit me eight times.147

(d) Harassment and bullying in the Army between 2000 and 2011

The abuse was perpetrated by generally anyone of a higher rank than I was. It felt like a constant barrage of abuse that I couldn’t escape. It seemed as though it was the mission of the perpetrators to humiliate and degrade me to break me down and see me suffer.148
As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 580 cases as raising plausible allegations of harassment and bullying within the Army (66 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Army).

Almost all complaints of abuse in the Army between 2000 and 2011 involved harassment and bullying. Of the 156 complainants who experienced abuse in the Army between 2000 and 2011, a total of 133 complainants reported having been subjected to harassment and bullying (85 per cent of Army complaints between 2000 and 2011). Most of these complainants were male, and a number of complainants were undertaking initial recruit or employment training in the Army at the time of the abuse (14 complainants).

Most of the harassment and bullying in the Army between 2000 and 2011 was carried out by groups of alleged abusers (89 complainants). An overwhelming majority of alleged abusers were of more senior rank to the complainant at the time of the abuse (116 complainants), including Lieutenant Colonels and Warrant Officers. Most alleged abusers were identified as being male (120 complainants), however the Taskforce also received some complaints of harassment and bullying carried out by female alleged abusers. Almost all complainants reported that they were subjected to ongoing campaigns of harassment and bullying. As one complainant told the Taskforce:

I was the recipient of various types of abuse whilst a member of the military such as degradation, harassment, intrusive and personal questioning, discrimination ... intimidation and lack of transparency in relation to procedures.

The nature of the harassment and bullying experienced by complainants in the Army between 2000 and 2011 is discussed below, including verbal abuse, acts intended to undermine or exclude, and harassment and bullying related to illness or injury.

(i) Verbal abuse

A large number of complainants experienced harassment and bullying in the form of verbal abuse (91 complainants), which included name calling, offensive comments, and having obscenities yelled at them. For example, one complainant described her experiences in the late 2000s as follows:

[The Major] said that I had to go down there and work my “arse” off to prove to him that I was worthy to be in the unit. ... The whole time I was sitting there, I was hardly able to defend myself and said about 20 words in total. The rest of the time he was speaking at me in a raised, unpleasant tone. I lost count of the number of times he used “f...” or “f...ing” and there were things he said which offended me both personally and professionally. At times he was leaning over his desk and pointing his finger at me. I just kept thinking to myself “what have I done, what have I done to deserve this”. I was trying to think of actual situations that would give him reason to scold me, but thought of none. ... After he finally dismissed me, I walked out. I was shaking, extremely mortified and upset. I felt like he had just stripped me of all my dignity, self-worth and ego – I felt numb. I went into a toilet and cried.

Complainants also reported that they were commonly targeted for verbal abuse as a result of their race or religion. This included being referred to as a “fucking dirty wog”, “nigger”, or derogatory comments about being of Asian origin. One complainant told the Taskforce, “There were racist comments and taunts at every corner it seemed. ... It was extremely humiliating for me.”

Some complainants reported that they were verbally abused due to personal characteristics, for example, on account of their age, or their perceived sexuality. Other complainants reported having been verbally abused after they put on weight, on account of a physical impediment or disability, or if it appeared that they were struggling with their level of fitness. Some complainants also experienced verbal abuse in circumstances where they either had or were perceived to have made a formal report of abuse to Defence.

(ii) Acts intended to undermine or exclude

[The Lance Corporal] would frequently lie to my superiors and other soldiers about my whereabouts and activities in a highly successful campaign to destroy my credibility and social interactions within the platoon. ... My Section Commander, Platoon Sergeant and Platoon Commander were aware of what was going on. I had no one to complain to.
A number of complainants told the Taskforce that they were undermined, sabotaged, ostracised or excluded by peers in the workplace. Complainants reported having been deliberately locked out of their room, given unachievable tasks or unrealistic timeframes, or had important information necessary to perform their job deliberately withheld. Other complainants reported having been belittled, berated and put down in front of others, yelled or sworn at, or publicly humiliated and insulted. Many complainants experienced a range of abusive behaviours, for example, as one complainant described:

> [T]he unacceptable behaviour that I was subjected to ... came in the form of “Harassment” and “Workplace Bullying”, specifically, intimidating body language, humiliation through sarcasm, criticism through malicious rumours, insults in front of other personnel regarding my competence and capacity for work, and belittling my opinions.

Acts of ostracising or social exclusion were also commonly experienced by complainants. These included being ignored, labelled a liar or spoken to in a demeaning way, repeatedly excluded from social activities, socially isolated while on deployment, publicly discredited, or being falsely and publicly accused of spreading malicious rumours.

### (iii) Harassment and bullying related to illness and injury

[The Sergeant] would be made aware of a member’s physical restrictions during the first session the member had with him. The member’s (physical) restrictions would be quickly disregarded and he would order all members to perform the same exercises, regardless of whether or not their injuries would be aggravated by his physical training routine. If a member complained about pain being caused by the exercises during the session, [the Sergeant] would instruct the member to “Man the fuck up”, or inform us that only homosexuals felt pain, concluding that we all must in fact be homosexual, a conclusion that caused great offence to the homosexuals of the platoon.

Many complainants reported that they experienced harassment and bullying when they were ill or injured, including while suffering from short-term limb injuries, head injuries, or life-threatening diseases such as cancer. Several complainants reported that they were called a malingerer or targeted for verbal abuse on account of illness or injury, often by members of superior rank. Other complainants were accused of being weak or of faking injuries, or of lying and defrauding the Army in relation to any illness, injury or medical appointments. Some complainants told the Taskforce that various attempts were made to have them discharged on account of suffering from illness or injury. Other complainants reported having been denied medical assistance, forced to work despite being under a medical restriction to the point where urgent medical assistance was needed, or having been expected to work as if they had no physical or medical limitations.

Complainants also reported being targeted for harassment and bullying by their peers and threatened, often while on sick leave, or having been made fun of in front of others for having a particular illness or disease. For example, one complainant who was injured at the time of the abuse, found out that someone had posted a photograph of him on a poster around base with the words ‘Missing, have you seen this malingerer?’

Other harassment and bullying experienced by complainants on account of illness or injury included being pressured to reveal confidential medical information, having important documentation about an injury go missing from their personnel file, having been set up to fail a physical test because of their illness or injury, or having been set up for punishment when ill or unwell.

### 19.5 Complaints of abuse in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 378 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse experienced by more than 300 complainants in the Air Force. This includes 89 cases of abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011, experienced by 79 complainants.

It is important to note that the Taskforce has categorised the abuse experienced by each complainant as forming one or more ‘cases’ of abuse. Many complainants experienced multiple cases of abuse. One case generally relates to abuse experienced at one location (occasionally abuse experienced over a number of locations may be classed as one case of...
abuse if it is part of an ongoing campaign of abuse). The statistical information provided below is based on the number of cases of abuse that occurred between 2000 and 2011 in the Air Force. The discussion of abuse throughout this section generally refers to the number of complainants, or individuals, who experienced a particular type or form of abuse during 2000 and 2011 in the Air Force.

The highest proportion of the total number of complaints of abuse in the Air Force occurred during the period 2000 to 2011. Abuse in the Air Force occurred fairly consistently across this period, although marginally more incidents of abuse occurred in more recent years, during the latter half of the 2000s. The Taskforce received reports of abuse that occurred as recently as 2010, and two incidents in early 2011, prior to the Taskforce cut-off date of 11 April 2011.

An overwhelming number of complainants reported abuse which occurred during regular Air Force service in this period (73 complainants). Complainants experienced abuse that occurred at a number of Air Force bases, while they were undertaking Air Force operations overseas, and while serving at other service locations (Army, Navy and joint logistics locations).

The most commonly reported type of abuse experienced during this period was harassment and bullying (72 complainants), followed by physical abuse (29 complainants), sexual abuse (15 complainants), and sexual harassment (14 complainants). Approximately half of these complainants experienced multiple types of abuse during this period, either because complainants experienced a series of incidents involving different types of abuse, or because they experienced a single incident of abuse that involved various types of abuse.

Women were overrepresented as complainants throughout this period, comprising approximately 40 per cent of all complaints of abuse in the Air Force during the period 2000 to 2011 (despite currently making up less than 18 per cent of all Air Force personnel).191 Almost all incidents of sexual abuse between 2000 and 2011 were experienced by women (14 out of 15 complainants). Similarly, almost all female complainants experienced harassment and bullying, and the overwhelming majority of complaints of sexual harassment during this period were made by women (13 out of 15 complainants).

The following sections provide a summary of the main types of abuse experienced by complainants in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011.

(a) Sexual abuse in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 130 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual abuse within the Air Force (35 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Air Force).

Of the 79 complainants who experienced abuse in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011, 15 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual abuse (19 per cent of Air Force complaints between 2000 and 2011). Notably, almost all of these complainants were female (14 complainants).192 In all complaints of sexual abuse the alleged abusers were male. Several of the more serious incidents of sexual abuse were reported to have taken place in very recent years, particularly in the late 2000s.193 Most cases involved a single incident of sexual assault. However in several cases the sexual abuse was related to an ongoing campaign of sexual harassment or harassment and bullying.194

The nature of the sexual abuse experienced by complainants in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011 is discussed below, including sexual assault, indecent assault, as well as other forms of sexual abuse.

(i) Sexual assault

A number of complainants who experienced sexual abuse during this period reported incidents of sexual assault [six complainants].195 All but one of these complainants was female. The assaults included anal or vaginal penetration, digital penetration and forced oral sex, as well as one incident of ‘t-bagging’ (involving the insertion of a man’s testicles into someone’s mouth, usually while they are asleep).196
Most incidents of sexual assault occurred during regular Air Force service, though two complainants also reported having experienced sexual assault during initial recruit or employment training.\textsuperscript{197} Most cases of sexual assault consisted of a single incident by one alleged abuser. However, a few complainants experienced sexual assault involving multiple abusers.\textsuperscript{198} Almost all cases of sexual assault took place in the complainant or the alleged abuser’s rooms.

Some complainants told the Taskforce of having felt betrayed and ashamed as the alleged abusers had been superiors that the complainant had trusted, or were co-workers or friends prior to the assault.\textsuperscript{199} For example, one complainant reported having been sexually assaulted by her Commanding Officer in her own home, after she had taken an overdose of sleeping pills and alcohol. She had called to advise him of her overdose. However, after having arrived at her residence and assisted her to her room, instead of calling the ambulance, he sexually assaulted the complainant. She told the Taskforce of having been unable to stop him due to her loss of consciousness:

\begin{quote}
I woke the following morning to find him still in my room. I was so ashamed at having taken an overdose and so fearful of losing my career in the military because of my actions that I forced myself to pretend like nothing had happened. I am unsure why he stayed until the morning and can only assume that it was to ensure that I did not need an ambulance during the evening. I did not make a complaint to anyone about what had happened with [him] and in fact not only did I not complain formally but I did not tell anyone at all about what had happened. I knew that if I were to complain about the rape then I would have to disclose the fact that I had taken an overdose which I felt would mean that I would be medically discharged from the military and I would lose my career and everything I had worked so hard to achieve. ... Not only did he breach the trust I had in him as a person but also the trust I had in him as my Commanding Officer.\textsuperscript{200}
\end{quote}

In the majority of cases of sexual assault reported to the Taskforce, alcohol had been consumed by the alleged abusers (nine complainants), or the complainant (nine complainants), and in some cases by both (six complainants). Typically, the sexual assault occurred at night after a night of drinking or after attending a social function. Several complainants were sexually assaulted in circumstances in which they were half-asleep\textsuperscript{201} or intoxicated or drugged,\textsuperscript{202} and reported having been incapacitated and unable to resist the alleged abusers.\textsuperscript{203}

For example, one complainant, who was 20 years old at the time of the abuse, told the Taskforce that she was assaulted after spending an evening drinking at a club:

\begin{quote}
The next memory I have was of the perpetrator taking off my pants and kissing and slobbering on me. I told him no and to cut it out. I tried shoving him away but he then started having sex with me standing up, pinning my arms hurting me so I couldn’t shove him away. I was starting to black out and it was hurting me because I was drunk and I was not able to consent and I had no sexual interest in the perpetrator. ... I told him to stop as it hurt and I didn’t want to have sex with him and I wanted to go. He got angry with me and said it couldn’t possibly hurt you stupid fucking bitch. I was both very frightened and angry at him for doing this to me and angry at myself for being drunk and not being able to defend myself. The next thing I recall was that I was somehow now lying on his bed with no pants on and I remember having pain in my genital and anal region. I was fading in and out of consciousness. He said something about getting a condom then I passed out. I woke up again and he was still inside of me passed out. I got really angry and upset as I knew that I had just been sexually assaulted and there is no way that I could have given consent due to being so heavily intoxicated and I was not attracted to the perpetrator at all. He got angry with me, shouted at me, called me a stupid fucking whore, a stupid bitch and to get the fuck out. I managed to find my pants (I was still wearing my bra, shirt and jumper) and I don’t remember returning to my room. I must have been very frightened at the time. ... I awoke later with very sore genitals and anal region.\textsuperscript{204}
\end{quote}

Alcohol also played a part in female complainants’ reluctance to report the abuse, with several female complainants describing that they felt guilty because they had been intoxicated. For example, the complainant quoted above told the Taskforce:

\begin{quote}
I did not report this at the time as I felt ashamed and that there was little point as I was intoxicated and so was he (but less so than I). ... I also did not want to get the people on base in trouble for pressuring me to drink so much alcohol and the initiation drink. It would have got the [club] shut down which would have affected every junior member on base. I was really worried about what people would think, due to overhearing many people’s opinions and negative attitudes on a prior sexual offence on a young woman ... they all thought that she asked for it by being drunk.\textsuperscript{205}
\end{quote}
She subsequently told the Taskforce that ‘the ADF really needs to look at its drinking culture and abuse of alcohol. Criminal offences and unacceptable behaviour need to stop being swept under the carpet’.

(ii) Indecent assault

A number of complainants experienced sexual abuse over this period in the form of indecent assault (six complainants). All of these were female complainants who were indecently assaulted by male alleged abusers. In all but one case, the alleged abusers were operating alone. The indecent assaults included groping or touching the breasts, groin and buttocks, hugging, kissing, forcing complainants to touch an alleged abuser’s penis, and unwelcome attempts to have oral sex.

In several cases, the alleged abusers were co-workers and colleagues of the same rank, or only slightly superior rank, as the complainant at the time of the abuse. However, most complainants were indecently assaulted by those of superior rank, including several cases in which complainants were indecently assaulted by their immediate supervisors.

One complainant reported being sexually harassed and indecently assaulted in the late 2000s by her direct supervisor during a work trip. She told the Taskforce that he made repeated attempts to kiss her and touch her even though she turned away and rejected these advances:

He had me in a tight embrace with his arms around me so I couldn’t get away. He kissed me, again opening his lips to which I tried to push him away but he wouldn’t let me go. I told him to please stop, I was not interested and I wanted to go to my bed. He tried to kiss me again as he said he was sorry. I turned my cheek so that he could kiss my cheek only. He let me go and I went to my room. A few minutes later someone was knocking on my door, I assumed it was [the officer]. I did not open the door and made no noise so not to engage with him.

As was the case in many reports of sexual assault, several incidents of indecent assault occurred during or after social occasions when alcohol had been consumed. Some complainants reported that they had been indecently assaulted when they had been in a state of vulnerability, for example, while alone in their room at night, or while injured.

(iii) Other types of sexual abuse

The Taskforce received reports of a number of other types of sexual abuse experienced by complainants in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011. Several female complainants reported that photos or videos had been taken of their naked bodies or while having consensual sex, without their consent, and which were subsequently distributed to others in Defence. These complainants were young women who told the Taskforce of having subsequently experienced severe embarrassment and were ridiculed by others.

For example, one complainant only realised that footage of her having sex had been taken when she was issued with a caution card and was formally threatened with fraternisation. She later discovered that the details were known to other Air Force members, and heard that her story of abuse was used as an example during training exercises. Another complainant reported that her co-workers had threatened to film her naked in the shower and indicated that they had already done so on a previous occasion.

(b) Sexual harassment in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 81 cases as raising plausible allegations of sexual harassment within the Air Force (21 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Air Force).

Of the 79 complainants who experienced abuse in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011, 14 complainants reported having been subjected to sexual harassment (18 per cent of Air Force complaints between 2000 and 2011). The overwhelming majority of these complainants were female (12 complainants).
Despite the relatively low incidence of sexual harassment complaints to the Taskforce, this type of abuse is likely to
have been much more prevalent within the Air Force than is indicated by the statistics for a number of reasons. This is
largely because many complaints of sexual abuse may have included behaviour that could also have been categorised as
sexual harassment.

For almost all complainants, the sexual harassment occurred in conjunction with other types of abuse carried out by the
same alleged abusers, most notably harassment and bullying, and sexual abuse. Most complainants experienced sexual
harassment carried out by a member of superior rank, with several complainants having reported that this caused them
to feel especially uncomfortable.

Complainants reported various types of sexually harassing behaviour, including constant references to their sexuality,\textsuperscript{226} comments about their body,\textsuperscript{227} and being exposed to pictures of naked women and other forms of pornography.\textsuperscript{228} A number of complainants were subjected to intrusive questions about their sex life, such as whether they were ‘getting any’.\textsuperscript{229} Some complainants reported having rumours and comments about their sexual reputation spread around base,\textsuperscript{230} often following an incident of sexual assault.\textsuperscript{231}

Some complainants experienced sexual harassment in the form of unwanted propositions for sex from co-workers and
direct supervisors, such as ‘how about a blow job then?’.\textsuperscript{232} A number of complainants reported having experienced
sexual harassment in conjunction with acts of physical abuse, such as physical restraint. This included situations where
an alleged abuser attempted to drag the complainant away from a public area,\textsuperscript{233} held the complainant close while
whispering in their ear,\textsuperscript{234} and locked the door of a room, trapping the complainant inside.\textsuperscript{235}

Other incidents of sexual harassment occurred in conjunction with acts of sexual abuse, such as groping of the breasts,
buttocks and groin,\textsuperscript{236} kissing and attempted kissing,\textsuperscript{237} and indecent exposure.\textsuperscript{238} For example, one male complainant was
repeatedly harassed by a superior, who would remove his penis from his pants, act like he was stroking it, while making
suggestive and offensive remarks to the complainant.\textsuperscript{239}

While most incidents of sexual harassment involved alleged abusers acting alone, several complainants told the Taskforce
that the sexual harassment formed part of a range of abuse carried out by a number of their co-workers. For example,
one complainant was subjected to ongoing sexual harassment by her co-workers while on deployment in the early 2000s,
including sexual harassment, physical abuse, sexual abuse and harassment and bullying.\textsuperscript{240} She told the Taskforce that
the alleged abusers stole her underwear from her tent, threatened to film her naked or watch her shower, showed her
pornographic material and repeatedly locked her in the toilets. During this campaign of abuse, one of the alleged abusers
indecently assaulted her in her tent, falling onto her, rubbing her breast with his hand, saying ‘I want to fuck you’, before
she eventually fought him off.\textsuperscript{241}

More than a third of all complainants who experienced sexual harassment reported that alcohol had been consumed and
was a factor in the abuse, with several incidents of sexual harassment taking place at, or after, a social function during
which alcohol had been consumed.\textsuperscript{242}

[c] Physical abuse in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 144 cases as raising plausible allegations of physical abuse within the
Air Force (38 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Air Force).

Physical abuse was the second most commonly reported type of abuse experienced by complainants in the Air Force
between 2000 and 2011. Of the 79 complainants who experienced abuse in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011,
29 complainants reported having been subjected to physical abuse (37 per cent of Air Force complaints between 2000
and 2011). While both male and female complainants reported experiencing physical abuse, most of the alleged abusers
were male (25 complainants). At least half of all complaints of physical abuse took place in the context of harassment and
bullying, with many of the alleged abusers having being senior in rank to the complainant, often their direct supervisors,
at the time of the abuse.
The nature of the physical abuse experienced by complainants in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011 is discussed below, including physical assault, threats of violence, and physical abuse related to illness or injury.

(i) Physical assault

A number of complainants experienced incidents of physical assault in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011. Some complainants reported isolated incidents of physical assault. Complainants reported that they were spat on, slapped on the head, bashed up and ‘king hit’, had objects thrown at them, and were shot. For example, one complainant reported that his keychain was torn from his neck during a surprise inspection by his superior, who called him a ‘fuck up’. After the superior was forced to apologise for the broken keychain, the alleged abuser then held him against the wall and threatened that he would ruin complainant’s career.

While many complainants experienced physical assaults carried out by members of superior rank, several complainants described being targeted by co-workers, including having lunchboxes, balls and other objects thrown at them as part of a campaign of harassment and bullying. The Taskforce also received a number of reports of physical assault carried out by members of the Air Force of junior rank to the complainant at the time of the abuse, including incidents where the subordinate was exhibiting aggressive behaviour which the complainant was attempting to address.

Some complainants reported having been physically assaulted during incidents of sexual abuse and sexual harassment, including situations where complainants were physically restrained or locked in rooms, dragged, and held against a wall.

(ii) Threats of violence

A significant number of complainants told the Taskforce that they were subjected to intimidation and threats, including threats of violence. Complainants reported being threatened with physical assault, including several death threats. Some complainants told the Taskforce that weapons were present or involved, heightening the intimidation and fear they experienced.

Many complainants reported that the threats of violence they received were part of an ongoing campaign of harassment and bullying.

One complainant reported that she was seriously threatened by a Leading Aircraftman at a graduation function after she confronted him about his behaviour, and that he continued to intimidate her after he was charged with numerous offences related to that incident. She told the Taskforce:

As the superior in this instance and in uniform I tried my best to subdue the situation so as to not cause a public scene. I was extremely intimidated and scared and ran to the female toilets where I locked myself in a cubicle fearing that [he] would follow me in to the toilets. ... As a result of this incident with [the Leading Aircraftman], I laid multiple charges against him. All charges were upheld and [he] was found guilty. ... [Later, the Leading Aircraftman] was posted two offices down from me in the workplace. I made complaints to supervisors that I did not feel safe and comfortable working with [the Leading Aircraftman] in the same building let alone two offices away from mine. These complaints and concerns were never addressed and were simply dismissed. For the entire period that I worked with [the Leading Aircraftman] being two offices away I would encounter him in the hallways at work where he would deliberately walk as close as possible to me to invade my personal space as a means of intimidating me.

Another complainant reported that a senior officer threatened her with violence during a joint logistics deployment, after he disagreed with a briefing she had delivered to other members of the unit:

I was reaching down, near the tent door, to pick up my [rifle] and return to my office when [he] spoke my name. By the time I had straightened up and turned to look at him (he was initially still at the front of the tent) he leant his seat and advanced quickly up the aisle and was almost on top of me. He was red in the face and glaring. He spat on me and, leaning into me to the point where I raised my rifle to fend him off, he hissed that he would ‘smash my fucking face in’ if I ever spoke to him like that again in front of his peers. I was genuinely worried that he was about to physically strike me so I raised my rifle in a two handed grip to push him away. My face was covered in spittle where he has spat on me and then sprayed my face further when threatening me. With the rifle braced between us I asked [him] if he’d like to repeat his threat in front of [the
senior officer]. He replied, “He’d say it in front of any fucking body I liked!” I said, “Right, let’s see the Boss then” or words to that effect. I half turned to back out of the tent, [he] pushed passed me quite violently and went outside. By the time I drew my breath and followed him, he was out of sight.

(iii) Physical abuse related to illness or injury

Several complainants experienced physical abuse in the form of having been denied medical assistance when they were injured during training exercises. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce of an incident during the early 2000s:

I was climbing down into the cave when my right leg slipped off a ledge and I fell injuring my right knee. With the assistance of my fellow course mates I was able to make it out of the cave. Upon exiting the cave I was examined by three of my course mates (all three are medical doctors) who deemed that I should be sent back to [base] to be seen by medical staff at the base hospital as they were concerned about the damage I had done to my right knee. The course director refused the request and deemed that I should continue with the rest of the course to the next location ... [three hour bus ride away]. At [the next location], one of the Doctor’s had again asked the course director to allow me to return to the base hospital as he was extremely concerned about my knee and the injury to it as it was extremely swollen. Again it was denied. It was only when all three doctors approached the Course director and stated their concerns (two hours after arriving at [the next location]) regarding denying me medical attention, was I allowed to return to base. I was instructed upon return to base by one of the directing staff returning to [base], that I was not allowed to attend medical till the following day; failure to follow that order would result in me being charged and removed from the course. ...

Next morning when I went to Medical, I was asked why I did not attend the previous day. I explained and this was relayed to the senior medical officer. My knee was x-rayed and after the films were reviewed by the radiologist and the duty Doctor, I was put in an ambulance and sent to [a hospital], where I was told an orthopaedic surgeon was coming over from [another hospital] to perform emergency surgery. The urgency was due to the x-rays indicating I had detached ligament and bone from my patella.

The complainant was subsequently made to participate in weapons handling training against medical advice, and threatened with removal from the course if she did not comply. During weapons training, she further injured herself and ended up in hospital with a splint for 12 weeks.

Complainants also reported that they were forced by direct supervisors to participate in activities against medical advice, including situations where the complainants were recovering from serious injury to their backs or knees. Complainants told the Taskforce that their subsequent collapse due to the injuries they sustained was perceived as ‘weak’ by their peers and co-workers.

(d) Harassment and bullying in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011

I worked in a dangerous, hostile and intimidating environment for 11 years and was not afforded the support of my superiors during this time. I was subjected to physical, verbal and sexual assaults. I was intimidated, harassed and bullied in my workplace. I was made to feel worthless and devalued as a human being and when I did attempt to stand up for myself I was never supported and my circumstances only became worse because I did not “toe the line”.

As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 253 cases as raising plausible allegations of harassment and bullying within the Air Force (67 per cent of all cases of abuse in the Air Force).

Almost all complaints of abuse occurring in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011 involved harassment and bullying. Of the 79 complainants who experienced abuse in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011, 72 complainants reported having been subjected to harassment and bullying (91 per cent of Air Force complaints between 2000 and 2011). While the majority of these complainants were male (46 complainants), a significant proportion were female complainants (26 complainants).

Most alleged abusers were of senior rank to the complainant at the time of the abuse (64 complainants). This included harassment and bullying carried out by direct supervisors, medical officers, chaplains and training instructors, with some complainants having experienced harassment and bullying by members of significant rank, including Majors, Wing Commanders, Warrant Officers, and Air Commodores. The Taskforce also received reports of harassment and bullying carried out by members of subordinate rank to the complainant at the time of the abuse.
A significant number of complainants experienced harassment and bullying in the context of other forms of abuse, especially physical abuse. In most cases, the abuse involved an ongoing campaign of harassment and bullying by either one alleged abuser or several alleged abusers over a period of time. A number of complainants reported having experienced harassment and bullying on account of personal attributes or perceived attributes, including gender, religion, sexuality, and on account of their status as a member of the Air Force. Several complainants from the Air Force also experienced harassment and bullying by members of the Army and Navy while serving in sections dominated by members of other services, or during joint operations.

The nature of the harassment and bullying experienced by complainants in the Air Force between 2000 and 2011 is discussed below. This includes verbal abuse, unreasonable tasks and demands, acts intended to undermine or exclude, harassment and bullying due to reporting abuse or unacceptable behaviour, and harassment and bullying related to illness or injury.

(i) Verbal abuse

Verbal abuse was the most common form of harassment and bullying, experienced by at least half of all complainants who reported abuse between 2000 and 2011 in the Air Force. Complainants reported having experienced verbal abuse in the form of yelling and ranting, offensive and demeaning language, screaming in close proximity, belittling remarks and put downs in public, abusive phone calls after hours, and receiving derogatory emails.

Complainants reported that they were referred to in demeaning ways, such as ‘faggot’, ‘slut’ and ‘whore’, and told they were lazy, stupid and incompetent. The terms ‘faggot’, ‘homo’ or ‘gay’ were also used to denigrate several complainants regardless of whether they identified as homosexual or not.

Several female complainants reported to the Taskforce that they had been subjected to harassment and bullying on the grounds of their gender, including derogatory comments such as ‘girls wear make up because they are ugly and they stink’.

A number of complainants reported having experienced harassment and bullying on account of their sexuality or perceived sexuality. For example, one male complainant described ongoing persistent and derogatory comments about his sexuality:

I had completed three weeks of [the course] when I first raised concerns about harassment and bullying on the basis of my sexual orientation with [the Padre]. I had, at that stage, put up with three weeks of comments to the effect of “you’re such a faggot”, “you’re so gay” and other comments such as “Shut up you pooper”, which were both directed at me and used in a general derogatory manner. The Padre offered no advice or assistance about how to address the conduct, instead he said something along the lines of “It was a shame [I] was gay because of the amount of beautiful women in the world.”

The same complainant experienced verbal abuse that continued over the following two locations to which he was posted:

I disclosed my sexuality and the fact that I was suffering from depression as a result of daily bullying and harassment to my [senior non-commissioned officer] during my first week at [base]. At some point during my posting at [another base], a memo was drafted by [my senior non-commissioned officer] which was titled “Understanding Homosexuality”, but did not identify me. This memo made things much worse for me and included a fellow member of the RAAF saying words to the effect of “understanding homosexuality? What’s to understand? I hate homosexuals; I wish they would all just die.” After this comment other members of the RAAF who were present at the time began to laugh and affirm what had been said. This sort of behaviour isolated me even more.

Another complainant described constant belittling and sexist comments about her bisexuality, including by her male supervisor, such as ‘I had a threesome once but I was so excited I couldn’t get a hard on!’, and ‘women who don’t paint their finger nails and toe nails are fucking filthy’. The same complainant also reported that on another occasion posters had been put up mocking same-sex interracial relationships, one of which she was in at the time.

In addition, complainants from the Air Force reported that they had been targeted for harassment and bullying in the form of verbal abuse by members of the Army or Navy while working for periods of time in sections dominated by members of other services, or during joint operations. These complainants described being constantly abused as ‘Raafie scum’.
For example, a complainant who was serving on deployment within an Army unit in the late 2000s told the Taskforce that the Sergeant created a culture which actively encouraged abuse from other members, so much so that the complainant was fearful for his safety:

After 10 years' service with the RAAF, I am fully aware of the cultural differences between the services. Light banter is something I've come to expect when working with the other services and I've never had any problems with working within a joint environment until I [went on deployment] to work with [that unit]. The hatred expressed towards me by the majority of Army members was slow and steady and by the end of my deployment, I felt that a few of [the unit] members wanted to cause me some serious bodily harm. I was called a "fucking RAAF cunt" by a few members of [the unit] at every given opportunity and there was zero joking involved. [One Sergeant] threatened that he "would love to shoot me in the face", he was serious and I have no doubt that he would have tried to cause me harm if given the chance. The same Sergeant would tamper with my meals [the few meals that were delivered to our working area due to excessive work commitments] and would handpick the meal I was to eat, even though the meals were identical. He would then watch me eat the entire meal with his close subordinates and they would make underhanded comments and snigger. I would have violent bouts of diarrhoea after eating these meals.

A number of complainants reported being made to complete unnecessary or inappropriate tasks by their supervisors, which were either demeaning or were bound to fail, therefore providing an excuse for further denigration. This included being given tasks that were not appropriate for the complainant, or were against Defence guidelines, only to result in a mark down of the complainant's annual performance appraisal reports when they refused to complete them.

Complainants also reported being given tasks with unrealistic timeframes and reprimanded when they could not complete them.

Some complainants described having been assigned meaningless tasks, apparently designed to humiliate the complainant, such as the 'splits' [a practice which required a member to change from one uniform to another in rapid succession]. For example, one complainant described being required to perform the 'splits' during the early 2000s:

On one occasion, he asked me to get changed for physical training, so I complied. Then he started yelling at me what are you doing? Go and get changed into your [other] uniform, again I complied. This went on for six continuous times on this occasion. I felt angry and embarrassed and at the time he was doing this for his own personal pleasure. After the sixth time of getting changed I finally asked him what you want me to do. His response was "don't question me or I will give you a record of conversation".

Complainants also reported having had their work and chances at promotion deliberately interfered with or sabotaged by co-workers and superiors, for example, by taking or hiding their personal items, or not assisting with their work. Other complainants reported that they were denied leave, had their leave entitlements obstructed, and were discriminated against in terms of entitlements and opportunities for training and promotion.

Complainants also experienced threats against their career progression, including threats to initiate investigation or inquiries against them, or to provide them with low performance assessments.

Many complainants also experienced harassment and bullying in the form of social exclusion or deliberate isolation by their peers and members of their unit. The ostracism took the form of being excluded from social and team functions, or work mates not helping the complainant.

A number of complainants experienced harassment and bullying after making a formal report or complaint about another member’s unacceptable behaviour and criminal activity. This often took the form of intimidation and taunts, spreading of rumours, ridicule, ostracism, being perceived as a ‘troublemaker’, and receiving death threats.
One complainant reported that he became a target for abuse when he was undertaking training during the early 2000s, because he asked his fellow students to take down pictures of bikini clad girls:

After I said that, my life became hell and it became even worse after I complained. It affects me to this day. Nothing was done about it, except the suggestion to change to a different accommodation block (which I did). It was suggested I should grow up and toughen up. They kind of said you should expect this in the workplace – this is the Air Force. Things became worse for me after I complained because the perpetrators told the others and I was made out to be a dobber. The harassment increased to the extent I ate lunch by myself, had no one to talk to, and had nothing to do outside class.

Other complainants told the Taskforce that the harassment and bullying intensified after they made a report about the abuse they experienced. For example, one complainant reported that he was harassed and bullied by his superior, against whom he had previously raised an equity complaint at a former posting. The alleged abuser was then posted to the complainant’s new posting as well, becoming his Senior Assessor, and then proceeded to spread rumours about him, belittle his work, unfairly task him with menial jobs, and delay his performance assessment.

(v) Harassment and bullying related to illness or injury

Some complainants reported being harassed or bullied because of their illness or injury, including being screamed at after collapsing during training, and given inappropriate tasks for their physical condition.

Several complainants also reported that personal medical matters had not been kept confidential, including being screamed at after collapsing during training, and given inappropriate tasks for their physical condition.

Some complainants reported being screamed at after collapsing during training, and given inappropriate tasks for their physical condition.

Several complainants also reported that personal medical matters had not been kept confidential, and in one case had been discussed and ridiculed in public, causing the complainant intense embarrassment.

1 In 2011-2012, for example, the average funded strength of the Navy Permanent Force was 14 054 personnel, while the Army comprised 29 697, and the Air Force comprised 14 243: Department of Defence, Defence Annual Report 2012-13, 2013, viewed 31 October 2014, http://www.defence.gov.au/AnnualReports/12-13/part_three/chapter_six.asp.


3 Above.

4 Above.

5 See, for example, Male Able Seaman – Lieutenant, [Locations redacted], late 1990s - late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman – Able Seaman, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Sub Lieutenant – Lieutenant, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman – Able Seaman, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman – Able Seaman, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

6 See for example Male Able Seaman – Lieutenant, [Locations redacted], late 1990s - late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman – Able Seaman, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Sub Lieutenant – Lieutenant, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

7 Male Chief Petty Officer, [Locations redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

8 Female Midshipman – Acting Sub Lieutenant, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Acting Sub Lieutenant, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

9 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

10 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

11 See, for example, Female Lieutenant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

12 Female Recruit, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

13 Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

14 Male Sub Lieutenant, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

15 Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

16 See, for example, Male Sub Lieutenant, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
17 Female Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

18 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Sub Lieutenant – Lieutenant, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

19 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

20 Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

21 Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

22 Male Sub Lieutenant, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

23 Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

24 Male Sub Lieutenant, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

25 Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

26 Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Leading Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

27 Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

28 See, for example, Female Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

29 Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

30 Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

31 See, for example, Female Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

32 See, for example, Female Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

33 Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

34 Female Leading Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

35 Female Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

36 Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

37 Female Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, HMAS Stuart, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Sub Lieutenant, HMAS Watson, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

38 Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

39 Female Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

40 See, for example, Female Sub Lieutenant, HMAS Watson, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

41 Female Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, HMAS Success II, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

42 Female Seaman, HMAS Albatross, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

43 Female Able Seaman, HMAS Success II, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

44 Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

45 Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Leading Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

46 Female Able Seaman, HMAS Stuart, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

47 Female Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

48 Female Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

49 Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

50 Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

51 Female Leading Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

52 Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Seaman, HMAS Darwin, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

53 Female Acting Sub Lieutenant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Leading Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Leading Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Leading Seaman, HMAS Arunta, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Acting Sub Lieutenant, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Recruit, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Acting Sub Lieutenant, HMAS Watson, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, HMAS Melbourne, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Able Seaman, HMAS Melbourne, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Adelaide, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Adelaide, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Leading Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Petty Officer, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Petty Officer, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Able Seaman, HMAS Melbourne, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Seaman, HMAS Kuttabul, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Able Seaman, HMAS Success II, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Leading Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Able Seaman, HMAS Success II, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Leading Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Acting Sub Lieutenant, [Location Redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Creswell, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Adelaide, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Adelaide, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Acting Sub Lieutenant, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Lieutenant, HMAS Cerberus, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, HMAS Watson, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
See, for example, Male Chief Petty Officer, HMAS Kuttabul, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Midshipman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Petty Officer, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female Sub Lieutenant, HMAS Albatross, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Petty Officer, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Sub Lieutenant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Petty Officer, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Albatross, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Seaman, HMAS Watson, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Seaman, HMAS Watson, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Chief Petty Officer, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Able Seaman, HMAS Stirling, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Petty Officer, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Seaman, HMAS Watson, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Seaman, HMAS Watson, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Seaman, HMAS Watson, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Creswell, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Seaman, HMAS Watson, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Seaman, HMAS Watson, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Seaman, HMAS Watson, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Able Seaman, HMAS Creswell, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Seaman, HMAS Watson, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Seaman, HMAS Watson, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Lieutenant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
See, for example, Female [Rank redacted], Lavarack Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
See, for example, Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
See, for example, Female Lieutenant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Private, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Lieutenant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
See, for example, Female [Rank redacted], Lavarack Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Sergeant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Private, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
See, for example, Male Private, ARTC Kapooka, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, [On deployment], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, [On deployment], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Latchford Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
See, for example, Female [Rank redacted], Lavarack Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Sergeant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Sergeant, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Captain, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Lieutenant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, [On deployment], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, [On deployment], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Sergeant, Victoria Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Corporal, [On deployment], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Major, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Recruit, [Locations redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Sergeant – Warrant Officer, Robertson Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, [On deployment], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Sergeant – Warrant Officer, Leeuwin Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Corporal, [Locations redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Corporal, [Locations redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Corporal, ARTC Kapooka, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Sergeant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Corporal, [Locations redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Sergeant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Sergeant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Sergeant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Sergeant, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Sergeant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Female Lance Corporal, [On deployment], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Corporal, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
177 Male Corporal, [On deployment], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Corporal, Lavarack Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

178 Male Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

179 Female Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

180 Male Private, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

181 Male Corporal, [Locations redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Captain, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Sergeant, Robertson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

182 Male Lance Corporal, [On deployment], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

183 Male Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

184 Male Private, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

185 Male Major, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

186 Male Private, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

187 Female Captain, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

188 Male [Rank redacted], Lavarack Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

189 Male Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

190 Male Private, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].


192 Aircraftman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

193 Female Recruit, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Lieutenant Commander, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

194 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

195 Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Corporal, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Lieutenant Commander, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

196 Aircraftman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

197 Female Recruit, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

198 Female Corporal, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

199 Female Corporal, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

200 Leading Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

201 Aircraftman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

202 Female Corporal, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

203 Leading Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

204 Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

205 Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

206 Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

207 Leading Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Flight Lieutenant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Squadron Leader, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

208 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

209 Leading Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
210 Leading Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
211 Leading Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Squadron Leader, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
212 Female Flight Lieutenant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
213 Female Flight Lieutenant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
214 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
215 Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
216 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Squadron Leader, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
217 Leading Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Flight Lieutenant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
218 Female Flight Lieutenant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
219 Female Flight Lieutenant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
220 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
221 Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
222 Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
223 Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
224 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
225 Leading Aircraftman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
226 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Richmond, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Flight Lieutenant, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
227 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Fairbairn, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
228 Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Sergeant, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
229 Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
230 Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
231 Female Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
232 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
233 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
234 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Richmond, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
235 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
236 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
237 Female Flight Lieutenant, RAAF Base Williamtown/Tindal, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
238 Leading Aircraftman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
239 Leading Aircraftman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
240 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
241 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
242 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
243 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
[Name redacted].
248 Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamstown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
249 Male Trainee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
250 Male Private, RAAF Base Laverton, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamstown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
251 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, RAAF Base Wagga, late 2000s [Name redacted].
252 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
253 Female Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
254 Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Tindall, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
255 Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Corporal, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
256 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Corporal, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
257 Female Sergeant, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
258 Female Squadron Leader, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
259 Female Flying Officer, RAAF Base Williams, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
260 Female Flying Officer, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
261 Male Sergeant, RAAF Base Richmond, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamstown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
262 Female Squadron Leader, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
263 Female Squadron Leader, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Pilot Officer, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
264 Male Flight Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamstown, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Corporal, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
265 Male Flight Lieutenant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
266 Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Townsville, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
267 Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Townsville, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Squadron Leader, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Squadron Leader, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Pilot Officer, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
268 Female Squadron Leader, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamstown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
269 Male Corporal, RAAF Base Wagga, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Squadron Leader, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
270 Male Flight Sergeant, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Corporal, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
271 Male Corporal, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
272 Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamstown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
273 Male Flight Sergeant, RAAF Base Amberley, 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Squadron Leader, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
274 Male Aircraftman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
275 Female Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
276 Female Pilot Officer, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
277 Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Townsville, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
278 Aircraftman, RAAF Base Wagga, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftman, Simpson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Williamstown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
279 Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Richmond, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Townsville, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
280 Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
281 Male Aircraftman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
Aircraftwoman, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftwoman, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Corporal, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit – Aircraftman, [Locations redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Corporal, [On deployment], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Corporal, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Corporal, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Corporal, RAAF Base Wagga, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Townsville, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Flight Sergeant, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Corporal, RAAF Base Wagga, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Corporal, RAAF Base Townsville, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Corporal, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Wing Commander, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Flight Sergeant, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Flight Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Sergeant, RAAF Base Townsville, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Squadron Leader, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Sergeant, RAAF Base Townsville, late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Sergeant, RAAF Base Williamtown, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Flight Lieutenant, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftman, RAAF Base Wagga, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Leading Aircraftman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Amberley, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Flight Sergeant, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Leading Aircraftman, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Airman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Corporal, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit – Aircraftman, [Locations redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Corporal, RAAF Base Townsville, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit – Aircraftman, [Locations redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Wing Commander, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit and Aircraftman, [Locations redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit and Aircraftman, [Locations redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
As at September 2014, the Taskforce had assessed 2224 cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse experienced by more than 1650 complainants during their time in Defence. This includes 42 complainants who experienced abuse as Australian Public Service (APS) employees within the Department of Defence.

APS staff are employed in Defence in a number of ways. Some APS staff are employed in the Department of Defence, including the Defence Material Organisation, while others are employed in Australian Defence Force service-specific organisations or branches.

As at 30 June 2013, Defence reported there were 22,107 APS employees: 21,940 ongoing APS employees, with an additional 167 APS employees that were employed on a non-ongoing basis. Of these APS employees, 5565 were in the Defence Material Organisation. Of the 22,107 APS employees, there were 13,109 men and 8998 women.

APS employees are employed in every Australian State and Territory, with some also stationed overseas. Most APS employees are in the Australian Capital Territory, followed by Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Tasmania.

The Taskforce has assessed a number of cases as raising plausible allegations of abuse where complainants were APS employees within Defence at the time of the abuse (42 complainants). At the time of abuse, complainants held the position classifications of APS Level 1 to Executive Level 2, with roles including executive assistants, managers, engineers, health professionals and information technology professionals. Of the complainants who were in the APS at the time of the abuse, slightly more were female than male (22 female complainants, 20 male complainants). Complainants were employed in the Department of Defence, including the Defence Material Organisation, and on service specific projects or at other Defence organisations. Locations of employment included ships, submarines, at Army barracks and on Air Force and Navy bases across the country. Most complainants were based in the Australian Capital Territory at the time of the abuse.

The abuse reported often spanned over years and sometimes decades. Most complainants experienced abuse that occurred in the 2000s (34 complainants), with 10 complainants who experienced abuse in the 1990s, and two complainants who experienced abuse in the 1980s. Given that most complaints related to abuse that occurred in the 2000s, there are a number of complainants who are still working in the APS and a number of alleged abusers who are still employed in Defence, including in the APS.

Significantly, in almost half of the complaints, the alleged abusers were members of one of the three Australian Defence Force services of the Navy, Army and Air Force (ADF members). Most complaints involved more than one alleged abuser, and in the vast majority of complaints, the alleged abuser or abusers were in a position of seniority to the complainant at the time of the abuse.

Complainants told the Taskforce that they were commonly targeted for abuse if they were perceived as a ‘whistle-blower’ or if they had made a previous report of abuse to Defence. For example, a number of complainants reported that the abuse started or increased when they raised concerns about workplace issues, including operational or safety concerns either in the general workplace or in relation to specific services, inappropriate conduct or management concerns. In some cases, complainants told the Taskforce that they believed they were targeted because a person or group of people took a disliking to them. Some reported that they were targeted because of their gender or perceived sexuality.

The most common type of abuse experienced by complainants in the APS was harassment and bullying (18 female complainants, 18 male complainants), followed by sexual harassment (nine female complainants, two male complainants), physical abuse (three female complainants, three male complainants), and sexual abuse (five female complainants).
The following sections provide a summary of the main types of abuse experienced by complainants during their time as APS employees in Defence.

20.1 Sexual abuse

The Taskforce received some reports of sexual abuse that occurred in the APS (five female complainants). In all of these complaints, the sexual abuse was carried out by individual, male alleged abusers, and mostly occurred in circumstances where the complainants and the alleged abusers had consumed alcohol.

Incidents of sexual abuse largely took place on a work-related trip involving overnight stay or during or after work drinks. Some complainants experienced sexual assault in the form of non-consensual vaginal penetration, and some complainants experienced indecent assault including being inappropriately touched or having had their breasts or buttocks squeezed.

20.2 Sexual harassment

The Taskforce received reports of sexual harassment in the APS (nine female complainants, two male complainants). In many of these complaints, the sexual harassment was carried out by an individual alleged abuser, and in a number of other complaints there was more than one alleged abuser involved. In all complaints, the alleged abusers were male, with less than half also involving female alleged abusers. In approximately one third of these complaints, the alleged abusers were ADF members.

Most complainants experienced multiple incidents or ongoing campaigns of sexual harassment. In some cases, alcohol was a factor in the abuse. Most complaints experienced sexual harassment in the form of verbal abuse that targeted their gender. This included the use of derogatory terms, sexually suggestive comments, comments about being able to see underwear through clothing, sexualised insults or making inappropriate comments about the complainant to others. A number of complainants reported that they were the subject of emails of a sexual nature that were circulated in the office, or that they received sexually degrading telephone calls.

A number of complainants reported that the sexual harassment they experienced included sexualised intimidation or bullying, or contributed to a fear that they would be sexually abused. This included being exposed to pornographic material or images of naked or partially naked women in the office, or being asked intrusive questions relating to their sexual activities.

20.3 Physical abuse

The Taskforce received complaints involving physical abuse (six complainants). Most complainants experienced abuse carried out by a male individual alleged abuser, many of whom were employed in a position of seniority.

All of these reports involved a single incident of physical abuse, during which the complainant was slapped, punched or struck on their body, often following other abuse or a confrontation. Most incidents of physical abuse occurred in the workplace or at a work-related event.

20.4 Harassment and bullying

Most complainants who were APS employees in Defence at the time of abuse reported having been subjected to harassment and bullying (36 complainants). There were equal numbers of male and female complainants who experienced this type of abuse (18 female complainants, 18 male complainants). Most complaints involved more than one alleged abuser, and almost all alleged abusers were employed in a more senior position to the complainant at the time of the abuse. In approximately one third of the complaints regarding harassment and bullying, the alleged abusers were ADF members.
Almost all complaints involved a campaign of harassment and bullying carried out over a period of time, which involved multiple forms of harassment and bullying. The nature of the harassment and bullying experienced by complainants who were APS employees in Defence at the time of the abuse is discussed below. This includes verbal abuse, acts intended to undermine or exclude, and harassment and bullying related to illness or injury.

(a) Verbal abuse

Many complainants were subjected to verbal abuse that involved the use of profanities, being yelled or screamed at, or being spoken to unnecessarily loudly or in an aggressive and intimidating manner. Such behaviour was also often carried out by supervisors and conducted in front of others.

Some complainants reported that the abuse involved insulting comments about their family members or friends. Other complainants were verbally abused in the form of derogatory terms related to their sexuality or appearance. A number of complainants reported they were spoken about negatively behind their backs. Some complainants were subjected to verbal abuse on their personal telephones, in some instances outside of work hours and while they were at home. A number of complainants reported that they were yelled or screamed at while in a confined space such as an office or room that was closed off. For some complainants, these instances of verbal abuse were like outbursts, while others reported that they were screamed at for lengthy periods of time, sometimes for hours.

(b) Acts intended to undermine or exclude

A number of complaints regarding harassment and bullying involved behaviour intended to undermine or sabotage complainants in their work. Some complainants reported deliberate attempts by supervising staff to prevent their career advancement, for example, through false accusations, unfair charges, being provided with misleading information, or being denied equipment or information necessary to do their job. At times, the abuse was more closely related to feedback on complainants’ work performance or their career progression. Some complainants reported that they continually experienced delays in meetings relating to work performance, were threatened with demotion, had promotions rescinded, or were pressured to sign incorrect position or duty statements.

Other complainants told the Taskforce of being undermined or sabotaged in the form of an inconsistent and unfair application of workplace policies. This included being given different and lower entitlements than colleagues of the same position classification; being continually monitored in relation to certain work or activities, such as unreasonable monitoring of personal calls; being pressured to ignore certain safety or security requirements; experiencing the unfair distribution of work, including having workplace responsibilities reduced without any apparent explanation, and having a high increase in workload. Some complainants reported having overtime approval refused, being given unrealistic deadlines, having their workstations or personal belongings interfered with or removed, or experiencing long delays in the approval of travel allowances.

In many complaints regarding harassment and bullying, complainants reported that derogatory or negative comments or conduct was carried out in front of others, which had the added effect of ostracising them from their colleagues and peers. In some instances, for example, people would get up and leave when a complainant would arrive and sit down. In other cases, alleged abusers encouraged others to target and denigrate the complainant. Complainants also reported being ignored by colleagues and supervisors.

Some complainants reported that they were not invited to or included in meetings that were necessary for their work, and at times this exclusion involved not being given access to information that was important for their work. Other complainants reported they were excluded from work or social functions, or were deliberately physically isolated after being instructed to work in locations of some distance from the rest of their peers.
(c) Harassment and bullying related to illness or injury

A number of complainants reported that they were subjected to discriminatory treatment on account of either their illness or injury. Some complainants reported they were called a ‘malingering’, subjected to negative comments about their appearance following medical treatment, refused approval of sick leave despite having a medical certificate, or were forced to return to work too early after their illness or injury, sometimes resulting in the need for emergency medical attention and hospitalisation. Some complainants reported that they were contacted while on leave for recovery and threatened, or were teased about not being able to do their job once they returned to work.

Such abuse also related to the illness or injury of family members. For example, complainants reported that alleged abusers made negative comments about the medical conditions of their family members, were accused of fabricating their family member’s condition so that they could take leave, or were unfairly refused leave that was requested to provide emergency support for their family members.


2 Above, p 138.

3 Above, p 144.

4 As at 30 June 2013, there were 9362 APS employees in the Australian Capital Territory, 4400 in Victoria, 3394 in New South Wales, 2318 in South Australia, 1484 in Queensland, 604 in Western Australia, 354 in the Northern Territory, and 87 in Tasmania: Above, p 146.

5 Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 1990s to early 2000s, [Name redacted].

6 Male APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

7 Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

8 See, for example, Female APS employee, [Location redacted], early 1990s to late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

9 See, for example, Female APS employee, [Location redacted], early 1990s to late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

10 Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

11 See, for example, Female APS employee, [Location redacted], early 1990s to late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

12 Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], early 1990s to late 1990s, [Name redacted].

13 Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

14 See, for example, Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].

15 See, for example, Female APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

16 See, for example, Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].

17 See, for example, Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].

18 Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 1990s to early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

19 See, for example, Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

20 See, for example, Male APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s to late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
COMPLAINTS OF ABUSE IN THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

21 Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

22 Male APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s to late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

23 Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 1980s to early 1990s, [Name redacted].

24 Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

25 Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

26 Male APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s to late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

27 See, for example, Male APS employee, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

28 Male APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s to late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

29 See, for example, Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 1980s to early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

30 Male APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s to late 2000s, [Name redacted].

31 Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

32 Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

33 See, for example, Male APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

34 See, for example, Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s to late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

35 See, for example, Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

36 See, for example, Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

37 See, for example, Male APS employee, [Location redacted], early 2000s to late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male APS employee, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
21. Defence management of abuse

21.1 Taskforce approach to management of abuse by Defence

One of the key questions the Taskforce has considered is how Defence has managed reports of abuse. Complainants have repeatedly told the Taskforce how important it is to them that their complaints of abuse are well managed and of the very significant impacts on them when their complaints of abuse were mismanaged by Defence.

As set out in section 7.1(d), a report of abuse can be an actual report, but in some cases the Taskforce has found Defence mismanagement where there was no actual report. That is, where the circumstances of the abuse contributed to a complainant not making a report about the abuse and/or Defence knew or ought to have known about the abuse, the Taskforce deems that a ’constructive report’ of abuse did in fact take place. For example, mismanagement might be found where:

- there was a pattern or practice of abuse such that Defence plausibly knew or ought to have known about the abuse and failed to stop or prevent it;
- the abuse was effected by a person of seniority or higher rank to the complainant to whom the complainant could have otherwise reported the abuse;
- the abuse was witnessed by a person in Defence in a position of seniority or higher rank but who took no steps to stop or prevent it; and/or
- the complainant presented to a superior or other person in authority with signs of injury as ought reasonably to have given rise to concern that the complainant was being, or may have been, abused, and they failed to make any reasonable enquiry.

As discussed in section 7.1(d) above, where a complaint of abuse contains a plausible account of Defence mismanagement, complainants are eligible for a specific Reparation Payment of $5000.

21.2 Statistics regarding Defence management

A significant proportion of plausible complaints of abuse in Defence have been assessed by the Taskforce as containing a plausible case of Defence mismanagement.

Many complaints made to the Taskforce contained multiple allegations of abuse. Not every allegation of abuse in each complaint is accompanied by a finding of Defence mismanagement. Rather, a significant proportion of plausible complaints of abuse have been assessed as including one or more plausible cases of Defence mismanagement. While Defence did appropriately manage a number of reports of abuse (whether actual or constructive), in many of these complaints, a separate allegation will have raised a plausible case of Defence mismanagement.

As at 8 October 2014, of the 1182 complaints to the Taskforce where the Reparation Payments Assessor had made a final decision in relation to an Application for Reparation Payment:

- 1160 complaints qualified for a Category 5 (Mismanagement by Defence) payment; and
- 22 complaints did not qualify for a Category 5 (Mismanagement by Defence) payment.

Of the 1160 complaints to the Taskforce which qualified for a Category 5 (Mismanagement by Defence) payment:

- approximately one half of these involved Defence failing to respond appropriately or at all to a report or complaint of at least one incident of abuse;
- approximately one third of these involved Defence failing to stop abuse occurring, where at least one incident of abuse was carried out by a person in a position of seniority or higher rank to the complainant to whom the complainant could or would have otherwise reported the abuse; and
• approximately one quarter of these involved at least one incident of abuse where information available to the Taskforce suggested the existence of a pattern or practice of similar abuse at the same or similar time and location, which Defence would plausibly have known about, and Defence failed to stop or prevent it.

These figures reflect the fact that while complainants can only receive one Category 5 (Mismanagement by Defence) payment, an individual complaint may raise multiple grounds of mismanagement which relate to one or more incidents of abuse.

In the majority of the 22 complaints which did not qualify for a Category 5 (Mismanagement by Defence) payment, the complainant did not report any of the abuse to Defence and Defence did not otherwise know of the abuse.

It is difficult to estimate the number of incidents of abuse that were not reported by complainants to Defence. Of the complainants who reported abuse to Defence, some experienced abuse only once and reported that abuse. Others experienced abuse on more than one occasion and reported it each time it occurred. However, some complainants initially reported an incident or incidents of abuse but then did not report others for a variety of reasons. It is not clear how many incidents of abuse went unreported for each of these complainants.

21.3 Defence management when abuse was reported to Defence

Although reporting mechanisms have differed between the services and policy guidance has evolved over the past 65 years (the period of time relating to which complaints of abuse in Defence have been made to the Taskforce), the chain of command has always provided the structural foundation for reporting abuse within Defence. Today, a member of Defence who wishes to report abuse should approach their immediate supervisor or superior in the first instance. Where this is not possible for any reason, the member should approach their Commanding Officer or another superior in their chain of command. Should this be unacceptable for any reason, complainants have recourse to report abuse outside of their chain of command – for example to a Defence padre, medical staff member, human resources staff member or a dedicated equity adviser. Defence members can also report abuse to services such as the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office or the Army Fair Go Hotline.

Complaints are internally managed by the Values, Behaviours and Resolutions Branch and the Inspector General of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). In regards to external reporting mechanisms, in some circumstances, Defence personnel can also lodge a complaint with the Commonwealth and Defence Force Ombudsman, the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Merit Protection Commission and the Office of the Australian Information Commission.

(a) Adequate management of actual reports of abuse in Defence

The Taskforce found that Defence adequately managed actual reports of abuse in a number of complaints; however, as noted above, the Taskforce may have still determined that a complainant qualified for mismanagement because while one actual report of abuse was adequately managed, the Taskforce may have determined that another actual or constructive report of abuse may have been mismanaged. Thus, only a very small number of complainants did not qualify for a Category 5 (Mismanagement by Defence) payment on the basis that their actual report of abuse was adequately managed.

The Taskforce considered a number of factors which may contribute to adequate management of a report of abuse, such as whether Defence:

- investigated all allegations and/or the alleged abuser/s identified by the complainant;
- referred appropriate allegations to military or civilian police;
- considered or took administrative action;
- provided reasonable support to the complainant during the process of responding to their report of abuse;
- informed the complainant of the progress of their report;
- informed the complainant of any outcomes from their report; and
- offered the complainant access to medical, legal and counselling services.
For a complaint to have been managed adequately, procedural effectiveness and fairness was just as important to complainants as emotional support and empathy. Keeping this in mind, the Taskforce found that in some cases, aspects of a report of abuse were managed well, but other aspects were mismanaged, leading to an overall assessment of mismanagement.

(b) Inadequate management of actual reports of abuse in Defence

As a consequence of reporting the incidents to the police I then became the subject of vilification, victimisation, bullying, abuse [verbal and physical] by the student body, aided by some staff members. There was no protection available to me as the victim and I had to live, work and train with those involved in the attack for the next 15 months prior to the case being heard [in court]. There were also no restrictions on the contact between the accused and the witnesses so they were able to freely associate at all times from when the incident occurred to the court case. During this time I was subjected to baiting (male trainees gathering evidence to prove that I was sexually promiscuous), being spat at, having items thrown at me, having a car driven at me at speed by the accused and missing hitting me by about a foot ... being spied on and reported to [a senior officer] to list just a few methods used to force me to drop the charges or to leave my job.4

Many complainants who reported abuse to Defence told the Taskforce that they received no response to their report, or that the response was inadequate or inappropriate for a range of reasons discussed below.

(i) No response to an actual report of abuse

In some complaints, an actual report of abuse elicited no response from Defence at all. Complainants told the Taskforce that no action was taken in response to actual reports of abuse for a number of reasons, including because Defence did not believe the complainant,5 treated the abuse as inconsequential,6 treated the abuse as an integral part of military life,7 told the complainant that they were weak or needed to toughen up,8 or told the complainant that nothing could be done due to insufficient evidence or witnesses.9 In some cases, the complainant was told that something would be done but the complainant never heard anything about their report again, with no explanation given.

Many complainants told the Taskforce that the superior to whom the complainant reported abuse treated the abuse as inconsequential and dismissed the complaint.10 For example, in the early 1970s, a male complainant reported ongoing sexual assault to a Defence medical officer, who ‘merely pushed [the report] to one side’ and told him not to tell anyone.10 Other complainants felt that their reports of abuse were trivialised, with a female complainant who reported ongoing sexual harassment by a colleague recalling that:

When myself or the other female Medics complained to other male Medics or Corporals, we were told to lighten up and that “[the Sergeant] was just a harmless sleaze” or “Don’t worry, he has always been like that, it’s just his way”.11

In another case, a complainant reported sexual abuse to several Defence members but the members treated the abuse as inconsequential or a part of military life and no action was taken. The complainant recalled that he was subjected to harassment and bullying while reporting the abuse:

I complained to my section commander who laughed and called me “[My mother’s] little boy” and then walked off. Then I complained to my Platoon Sergeant and Platoon Commander but they were also some of the 12 that witnessed and participated in this event. They laughed and told me to forget it otherwise I will get myself in trouble as I had told persons that included an officer to fuck off and I could be court marshalled. I then complained to the Military Police who also laughed and told me it was just fun, this is what sometimes happens in the Army ... so forget it.12

In other cases where an actual report of abuse was dismissed by Defence, the superior acted inappropriately by reproaching or chastising the complainant and subjecting them to verbal abuse.13 Complainants told the Taskforce of being called a ‘whore’14 and being told to ‘fuck off’15 and ´go fuck yourself´16 when reporting abuse.

A number of complainants told the Taskforce that superiors dismissed reports of abuse by telling the complainant that it was part of military life and that they needed to toughen up and try harder to get along with everyone.17 For example, a female complainant reporting sexual harassment was told ´it’s a man’s Army´18 and a male complainant reporting physical abuse was asked ´if you don’t like violence then why did you join the Defence Force?´19 One complainant who was injured
as a result of an initiation practice and subjected to intimidating behaviour recounted that ‘I was told constantly just “Harden the ‘F’ up”’.20

In some cases where the Taskforce found Defence mismanagement had occurred after an actual report of abuse, complainants made a report of abuse and assumed it had been progressed through the military justice system or other official channels only to never receive any response or see any difference in the circumstances of the alleged abuser.21 Several complainants made multiple reports of abuse to different superiors and never received a response.22 In some cases, when a complainant enquired as to the progress of their report, they were told that there was no record of it and that the documentation had been lost or ‘mislaid’.23

In regards to location-specific cases where Defence did not respond to an actual report of abuse, the Taskforce heard that some staff at Defence recruit and employment training establishments did not respond to reports of abuse and even actively discouraged reporting by referring to it as ‘dobbing’.24 This appears to have particularly been the case at establishments such as HMAS Leeuwin and the Army Apprentice School at Balcombe (see further the discussion on a culture that did not support the reporting of abuse in section 21.4(a)(i) below). For example, one complainant who attended the Army Apprentice School in the early 1970s told the Taskforce that after experiencing a physical assault:

I went out of the hut and went to the duty room to report the assault. The Duty Officer calmed me down and then warned me about ‘dobbing’. He told me to compose myself and not to let anyone see me blubbering. He told me to look out for myself as ‘this is not an easy place’.25

(ii) Inadequate or inappropriate responses to actual reports of abuse

The Taskforce heard numerous examples where an actual report of abuse was made and Defence took some action to respond to the report of abuse. In some cases this may have included positive or appropriate action; however, in many cases, ultimately the action taken was inadequate or inappropriate. Complainants told the Taskforce of inadequate or inappropriate responses to reports of abuse including being:

• offered inadequate or insufficient support or services;
• pressured to withdraw a complaint;
• blamed by management or otherwise being made to feel guilty for the abuse;
• made to work with or live near the alleged abuser; and/or
• subjected to further abuse because the alleged abuser or other members were informed or otherwise found out about the report of abuse.

Most complainants who experienced these inadequate or inappropriate responses to reports of abuse indicated that they were dissatisfied with the nature of the response or the outcome they received.

Many complainants told the Taskforce that they received inadequate or insufficient support and services after reporting abuse to Defence.26 This included being provided with limited or no information on the progress and outcomes of their report and limited or no access to counselling or legal services.27 Such mismanagement of reports of abuse left complainants feeling that their reports were not taken seriously by Defence and one complainant stated that Defence’s failure to inform her of any outcomes from her report left her with ‘no closure whatsoever’.28 One complainant who reported sexual abuse to Defence and the civilian police in the late 1990s told the Taskforce:

From that day forward, I was not informed of any action. I was not told if the accused was charged or even chased up, did not receive any correspondence/information from the Coxswains nor the civilian Police. Counselling was not offered to me by any member from Defence, command, my divisional chain or external services. ... A duty of care was not upheld and appropriate counselling, guidance and debriefing was never offered to me. I was a victim, left dealing with sexual assault alone.29

The Taskforce found that in some cases, aspects of a report of abuse were managed well, but other aspects were mismanaged. In one such case, a female complainant who reported a case of sexual abuse in the early 1990s stated
that the platoon staff members were ‘fantastic’ and ‘very supportive and visibly upset that it had happened to one of their
recruits’. However, an overall finding of mismanagement was found by the Taskforce because Defence did not provide
the complainant with sufficient counselling during the investigation and failed to keep the complainant informed on the
progress and outcomes of her report.

It is important to note that the complainant may have received inadequate or insufficient support or services regardless
of whether or not Defence otherwise adequately managed the report of abuse. For example, the Taskforce found Defence
mismanagement in circumstances where Defence complied with relevant Defence Instructions in responding to a report
of abuse but failed to adequately support the complainant during this period. In one case, mismanagement was found
because Defence did not provide reasonable support to a complainant who reported a sexual assault during the process
of responding to her report of abuse. In particular, when the complainant went to what was supposed to be a one-on-
one interview with her Commanding Officer, she found five officers present – a situation which she found ‘intimidating and
overpowering’. The Commanding Officer gave the complainant four options for her future and only 10 minutes to make a
decision. The complainant chose to discharge and stated that, ‘In hindsight, I know that I was in no frame of mind to have
made such an important decision, but I was not given the time I needed to consider things properly’.

In a reflection of a broader Defence culture of not reporting abuse, the Taskforce received several complaints where
Defence responded inappropriately to a report of abuse by pressuring the complainant to withdraw their report. For
example:

- A male complainant who reported a sexual assault by a more senior ranked male officer told the Taskforce that his
  superior officers repeatedly pressured him to withdraw his complaint. The complainant recalled that the superior
  officers to whom he reported the abuse ‘disregarded’ the incident and only sought to ‘cover themselves’.
- A female complainant reported a sexual assault to the Military Police after her superior officers failed to act, only
to be told by the Military Police to ‘drop’ the report because the alleged abuser was already under investigation for
drug-related offences and they did not want a sexual assault allegation to ‘disrupt their investigation’.

One complainant told the Taskforce that she withdrew her report of abuse because she was blackmailed after reporting
abuse. The complainant recalled that:

I reported the rape to medical ... and to the [local] police. RAAF police took over the investigation. The matter was dropped
because I was threatened that the photos taken of the attack would be shown to my parents. And that my career would be
over. The words that have haunted me [ever since]: “Forget it ever happened ... get over it” said by a RAAF policeman.

The Taskforce also heard of a number of cases where a complainant who reported abuse was blamed for the abuse by
Defence or otherwise made to feel responsible for the abuse. Complainants spoke of being made to feel guilty, accused
of lying, and accused of being a troublemaker after reporting abuse. This treatment occurred in situations involving all
types of abuse, but particularly where complainants reported sexual abuse or sexual harassment. A female complainant
who reported a sexual assault in the late 1990s recalled that she attended an interview with a male Military Police officer:

[He] advised me that the investigations were complete after the allegations had been addressed and he said that I was
lying as there were statements from males ... stating I was promiscuous. This made me feel sick. I was being treated as
someone who had committed a crime and being accused of making false allegations. I provided the name of [a female
witness], and they interviewed her. ... But this apparently didn’t make any difference to their findings. ... It was clear they
were prepared to get rid of evidence just to have the matter finalised with “no case to answer”.

Other examples demonstrating inadequate or inappropriate responses to actual reports of abuse included situations
where complainants were made to work with or live near their alleged abuser following the abuse. A female complainant
who reported a sexual assault in the early 1990s recalled that:

The perpetrator was tasked to drive me to ... a specialist appointment. I found this to be odd as a friend had already offered
to drive me. The matter of the assault was not raised, he talked about ... getting out of the Army. I did not talk to him in the
90 minute round trip. I had no choice in who drove me, I am in the Army and am required to do what I am told. I was terrified
the entire trip. I suffered a nervous breakdown as a result and subsequently went home.
Not all complainants were able to identify their alleged abuser at the time of making the report of abuse and in one case, a female complainant who reported an indecent assault to Defence told the Taskforce that Defence knowingly allowed her to continue to serve alongside her alleged abuser without her knowledge for three years. The complainant was never informed of the progress or outcomes of her report of abuse and it was only when she sought information on the case from the civilian police that she discovered the alleged abuser’s identity and finding of guilt in a civilian court. The complainant realised to her ‘horror’ that she had been ‘coming into contact with him on a regular basis’ in her workplace.48 The complainant described to the Taskforce the Defence mismanagement of her report of abuse. She stated that, ‘Withholding information, any progress and failing to provide any sense of security or reassurance of my safety’ had caused her ‘great distress’.49 Many complainants told the Taskforce that not hearing about the outcomes of their report of abuse or finding out from a third party caused them significant distress.

The Taskforce found Defence mismanagement in a number of complaints involving sexual offences where it appears that Defence took a number of appropriate steps in response to a report of a sexual offence, including referral to civilian police and provision of support to the complainant, but failed to consider any administrative action in relation to the alleged abuser. In particular, this occurred in a number of cases where the civilian police decided not to prosecute the sexual offence (for example, due to a lack of evidence) or the complainant decided not to proceed with a report made to civilian police.50 This resulted in situations where, although a serious disciplinary issue had been identified, Defence believed they were unable to take action to address it. Complainants were particularly distressed that Defence failed to take action to address the situation or discipline the alleged abuser. In some cases, Defence’s failure to consider administrative action meant the complainant was required to continue working with or near the alleged abuser.51

Although the Taskforce acknowledges that the relevant Defence Instructions at the time of the report of abuse prevented administrative action in relation to sexual offences, the Taskforce found that the Defence Instructions did not prevent Defence from taking administrative action in relation to ‘behaviour that was the subject of the complaint or in relation to some other kind of unacceptable behaviour distinct from the sexual offence’.52 Therefore, the Taskforce assessed that Defence had the ability to initiate some form of administrative action in relation to a reported sexual offence, whether or not there was a formal investigation into the allegation by police or a subsequent court case, because an administrative sanction could still be imposed on the alleged abuser based on the same set of facts. Cases in which no administrative action was taken were particularly prevalent at the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) in the mid-1990s because ADFA staff members incorrectly understood the policy at the time to mean that they were unable to initiate disciplinary action in relation to any alleged criminal offences which were referred to civil authorities [see the Taskforce Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy for further information].53 The Taskforce notes that Defence policy in this area has been clarified to reinforce that administrative action can be considered in situations where there is concurrent Defence Force Discipline Act or civilian police investigation.

(iii) Official punishment or discipline resulting from actual reports

Some complainants told the Taskforce that reporting abuse resulted in them being punished or disciplined by being charged,54 given extra duties,55 threatened with discharge or imprisonment,56 or actually discharged.57

In some cases, punishment and discipline resulting from a report of abuse was often preceded by other types of Defence mismanagement. For example, one complainant who reported sexual abuse carried out by a member of a superior rank while serving at HMAS Leeuwin was labelled a ‘troublemaker’ because he was not believed in favour of the alleged abuser.58 This resulted in an insufficient investigation into the reported abuse and the complainant being punished on trumped up charges for making what were perceived to be unsubstantiated allegations against a superior officer.59

The Taskforce heard with concern that Defence threatened some complainants who reported sexual abuse with charges of fraternisation.60 A female complainant who was subjected to a sexual assault by multiple peers in the late 1990s recalled that when she reported the abuse:

One of the Coxswains turned the tape recorder off and stated that if I did not agree that it was consensual sex I would lose my job, my parents would find out and that they would keep me there until I agreed to this. I was charged with sexual misconduct, having to pay $100 and serve seven days of chooks punishment, with the same three male perpetrators.61
In a small number of cases, complainants reported that they were threatened with discharge or imprisonment or actually discharged after reporting abuse. For example, a complainant who attempted suicide after a member of the Military Police arrested her for insubordination immediately following a sexual assault and did not believe her report of sexual assault recalled that:

After they stitched me up and discharged me, they arrested me again and put me in the lockup on base. I was informed that I had three charges against me including “insubordination” and a Section 40 which was “wilfully injuring myself with intent to render myself unfit for duty”. I was locked up without any care or counselling and I was completely traumatised and petrified about what was going to happen to me. ...

At the formal hearing, the Commanding Officer of [the unit], dismissed two of the initial charges, including the one for the initial arrest the insubordination, but found me guilty on the Section 40 and sentenced me to two weeks lock up and two weeks [confinement to barracks] for the attempted suicide.

I was completely and utterly devastated by the workplace bullying, attempted rape, the assault, vilification and total disregard for my humanity and safety. I had suffered a major nervous breakdown and was left to rot in lock up.

(iv) Further abuse following an actual report

The Taskforce heard of some situations where, after making a report of abuse, a complainant was subjected to further abuse. It appears that such abuse was carried out to deter complainants from reporting abuse or to punish them for reporting abuse that they experienced or witnessed, demonstrating a lack of protection for those who chose to report abuse. The further abuse could be carried out (or incited) by the superior to whom they reported the abuse, the person who had previously abused them, or others. Further abuse by the alleged abuser or others usually occurred when an alleged abuser had been spoken to or punished (indicating that Defence’s initial response was adequate or appropriate), but the abuse then continued – or indeed worsened – following Defence’s initial response. That complainants experienced abuse following an actual report to Defence raises concerns about confidentiality of reports of abuse, with some complainants stating that the nature of their reports became public knowledge through rumours or gossip being spread on base, as well as Defence not adequately monitoring a situation following their response (which may have been adequate at the time) to the initial report of abuse. In many cases, experiencing further abuse following a report of abuse meant the complainant was not prepared to report abuse again.

Many complainants who reported abuse to Defence stated that they were subjected to harassment and bullying after making a complaint. For example, complainants reported that they were verbally abused after reporting abuse, such as being called a ‘jack’. Some complainants noted that this further abuse followed them across various locations throughout their service. One complainant who reported his supervisor for harassment and bullying while serving at one Air Force base told the Taskforce that he was subjected to further bullying at another Air Force base by the same individual. The complainant recalled that:

On the first day that [the Warrant Officer] came into contact with me at [the base] he made the statement “One more for me to crucify!”. ... The previous equity issue with [the Warrant Officer] where he was proven to be at fault had turned around to be my worst nightmare, where, as my senior assessor, he fixated on tormenting, bullying and harassing me to his amusement, with the satisfaction that the senior management at [the unit] would back up the [Warrant Officers] as “that is how it was in the military as the troops should never challenge the hierarchy”.

In some cases, complainants were subjected to physical or sexual abuse as a result of reporting abuse. This was particularly common where the alleged abuser was informed or otherwise found out through the ‘grapevine’ that the complainant made a report, or where abuse was carried out by a group of peers. One complainant who reported a sexual assault to the Military Police while serving in the Army during the late 1970s recalled that he was subjected to further abuse once the abusers found out about his report and ‘immediately treated differently’ when his platoon became aware that he had reported the abuse. The complainant recounted that:

I went to my chain of command and told them what had been happening. I asked to be moved to another room. I was treated like I was in the wrong for asking and after that, was treated poorly by the Corporals and Sergeants in charge of my course. I was not moved to another room, and it did not take long for [the Privates] to find out that I had complained about
them. From that point forward, the abuse and intimidation got worse. They often did things like rub and wipe their penises and anuses on my pillow and sheets. It got to the point where I was scared to go back to my room.71

Another complainant told the Taskforce that:

One night ... [a Private] grabbed me and gave me a wedgie until my undies broke, then he pushed me onto the bed. He then picked up a vacuum cleaner pipe and bent me over. He pushed it in between my buttock cheeks until it began to push up my anus. I forget how or why they stopped, but they eventually did so. ... It did not take long for everyone to hear that we had gone to the Military Police. I was then bullied and harassed by most people in my course.72

A number of female complainants told the Taskforce of having been subjected to ongoing sexual harassment as a result of reporting sexual abuse or previous sexual harassment.73 A female complainant who was sexually assaulted by a superior when she was 16 years old and undertaking training in the Navy recalled that after she reported the abuse:

I was treated badly by nearly everyone. I couldn’t go anywhere without being called a slut, being told I had asked for it and being called a “lagger” for dobbing on him. People called me names and made offensive gestures toward me.74

In another case, a female complainant who reported a sexual assault carried out by her supervisor while serving in the Air Force in the early 1970s told the Taskforce that she was then subjected to further sexual harassment and harassment and bullying:

As a result of reporting the sexual assault he gave me worse treatment. He wrote a very poor report on my service record and rang ahead and slandered me at [the next base] I was posted to. I was ordered by the Petty Officer in charge of [my] training course to have a chest x-ray. I was told it was routine procedure. ... The chest x-ray was taken by the radiographer, then it was passed around to all the service men on the base so they could look at my breasts.75

Male complainants also experienced further abuse after making a report of sexual abuse and sexual harassment to Defence. One such complainant told the Taskforce that he was subjected to further abuse by a staff member, whom the complainant had approached to report sexual and physical abuse he experienced:

When I told him how much I was suffering, he rubbed my leg and said that he would “help me if I helped him”. I took this to mean that he would help me if I performed some sort of sexual favour for him. ... The incident ... further reinforced my feelings of shame and degradation, and this incident also caused me to feel suicidal, as I felt there was no-one left to go to, no-one to stop what was happening to me.76

21.4 Defence management when abuse was not reported to Defence

(a) Reasons for under-reporting of abuse in Defence

As noted above, many complainants told the Taskforce that although they experienced abuse in Defence on one or more occasions, they did not make a formal report of the abuse. Complainants provided a wide range of reasons for not reporting abuse, including:

- a culture at the relevant establishment that did not support the reporting of abuse;
- an absence of effective reporting mechanisms;
- stigma or shame associated with having been abused, particularly in the case of sexual abuse;
- threats or a perceived risk of being subjected to further abuse; and/or
- threats or a perceived risk to career.

In many cases, complainants became aware of the above reasons for not reporting abuse either when they reported abuse and experienced the negative consequences or insufficient responses described in section 21.3(b), or when they witnessed or knew of this having happened to others.
A culture that did not support reporting of abuse

Many complainants told the Taskforce that they did not report some or all of the abuse they experienced, as the prevailing culture of the relevant Defence establishment where the abuse occurred did not support reporting of abuse. This was particularly common in relation to complainants who reported abuse at recruit or employment training establishments. For most of these complainants, the reluctance to report abuse was based on negative connotations or repercussions associated with ‘dobbing’ or ‘jacking’. A number of complainants told the Taskforce that they felt there was an expectation that they would not tell on their mates, as to do so would be considered ‘soft’ or ‘weak’, or in some cases tantamount to a crime. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce of his experience at HMAS Nirimba in the late 1960s:

‘It was accepted at the time that these incidents were not reported to anyone in higher authority. It would be seen as not acceptable in the Navy tradition of being “tough” and being able to take anything that a perpetrator could give out. It was also accepted practice that a “dobber” would be singled out to attract further retribution.’

Instead, complainants described a culture at recruit and employment training establishments where you were expected to ‘stand up for yourself’, and where witnesses to abuse ‘did not and would not get involved’. For some complainants, reporting was not even an option that crossed their minds; instead, ongoing abusive practices were considered to be ‘normal practice’ and an everyday part of life in Defence.

In many cases, complainants reported that this pervasive ‘culture of silence’ was reinforced by the fact that staff or other superiors were aware of some or all of the abuse, and either did nothing to prevent it, and in some instances actively encouraged it. Again, this frequently arose in the context of abuse experienced at recruit and employment training establishments, and will be discussed further in section 21.4(a)(i) below.

A number of complainants told the Taskforce that they felt there was no point to reporting, as any complaint they made would fall on ‘deaf ears’. In some instances, this arose where the abuse involved multiple perpetrators, and the complainant felt their word would not be believed against that of the alleged abusers. Other complainants stated that they had seen what happened to other members when they reported abuse, and made a decision that reporting would be pointless on this basis. This was described by a female complainant following an incident of sexual assault in the early 2000s:

‘I did not tell anyone as I felt that there was nobody to tell and felt violated and embarrassed that this had happened to me. The culture was that you wouldn’t be believed. They [men] talk about women and brag about what they do to women. Prior to this happening I had heard similar situations that had occurred to other female trainees with other training officers, and other general incidences which made me believe trying to do something would be a pointless and painful exercise.’

Multiple complainants also told the Taskforce that they assumed no one would believe them due to their young age and junior rank at the time of the abuse. This was particularly common where the alleged abuser was in a position of seniority to the complainant. For example, one complainant who experienced abuse as a junior sailor on board HMAS Melbourne II stated ‘we were [Ordinary Seamen] lower than the low in Naval lore so who would believe us anyway’. Another complainant told the Taskforce that her alleged abuser explicitly warned her no one would believe her if she reported an act of indecent assault:

‘I told him that if he continued, I would report him. He then told me that no one would listen to me because I wasn’t even [a non-commissioned officer] and I was only a trainee soldier… I told no one about what the Captain did to me. I thought to myself that I couldn’t tell anyone because he was an officer and he had told me that no one would take any notice of what I had to say. He was a Captain and I was a recruit – I wasn’t even a proper soldier.’

An absence of effective reporting mechanisms

As discussed in section 21.3 above, there have always been basic procedures for reporting abuse in Defence. However, a number of complainants told the Taskforce that these reporting mechanisms were not effective in their situation.

The reasons for which reporting mechanisms were not perceived to be effective are complex, and include other factors responsible for the under-reporting of abuse, in particular the overall culture that did not support the reporting of abuse, and fear of retribution.
For some complainants, those responsible for perpetrating the abuse were staff members or direct supervisors to whom the complainant may have otherwise reported the abuse. In these cases, many complainants felt that there was a lack of alternative processes for reporting, or that the alternative people to whom they might have reported were already conscious of the abuse, or would not be in a position to do anything because they were of the same or lower rank as the abuser. For example, for one complainant the alleged abuser was not only his supervisor, but also his Equity Officer, and as such 'I found that I could only go to her to complain ... about her. Not a good situation'.

Another complainant told the Taskforce:

I felt completely unable to report the abuse. The whole battalion hated me. I had no one to report to who was not either a perpetrator or already completely aware of what was going on. I eventually went AWOL, as I felt that was my only option.

Other complainants felt that there was a lack of support for those who did report, which undermined confidence in the system and contributed to the likelihood that the abuse would not be reported. This was described by one complainant as follows:

I never reported any of these incidents because there was no guidance or support to anyone making a complaint or reporting an incident. It was extremely clear that we were to take what we got and keep it to ourselves. ... I felt helpless and utterly unsupported. There was no one to turn to and no complaint mechanisms in place. The only way to make it stop, to my mind, was to go AWOL and this is what I did.

For female complainants, a reluctance to report was sometimes on the basis that they felt isolated and ostracised due to their gender, which contributed to a sense that there was no one to whom they could appeal for help. This was particularly common where the complainant was one of only a few women in their relevant intake or posting, and particularly apparent in the 1970s and 1980s, when women were first accepted into many areas of Defence. One complainant told the Taskforce:

I felt I was between a rock and a hard place. Shame prevented me from asking for help. But whom would I have asked. The most notable thing about this time was the lack of pastoral care of any sort. I do not remember any mentoring or support, and we [women] were misfits ... because there were so few of us. We did not fit anywhere. And no support was offered in order that life might have been a bit easier for us and to get our feedback. This was a trial after all.

A number of female complainants further stated that their reluctance to report was increased by the fact that there were no female superiors or equity advisors at the time to whom they felt comfortable reporting abuse. This commonly arose in the context of sexual harassment and sexual abuse, particularly during earlier decades where there were still relatively few women in Defence.

(iii) Stigma and shame associated with having been abused

I know I should have gone and spoken to someone about the rape but I could not bring myself to let on that I had been the victim. I felt ashamed, dirty, abused and there was no way I was going to tell anybody what happened to me.

A number of complainants told the Taskforce that they did not report abuse because they were concerned about the associated shame or stigma. This was particularly the case for complainants who experienced sexual abuse.

Many complainants stated that they did not report sexual abuse as they were in fear of ‘being labelled’, for example as a ‘poofter’, ‘queer’, or ‘slut’. As described by one complainant, ‘the ensuing stigma, even for a victim, would have been crippling’. For some of these complainants, this was based on what they had witnessed when others reported sexual abuse (discussed above at section 21.3(b)).

For male complainants who experienced sexual abuse during earlier decades, reluctance to report was increased by the fact that at the time, homosexuality was not tolerated and could lead to discharge from Defence. One complainant who experienced sexual abuse at HMAS Leeuwin in the early 1970s told the Taskforce:

I never directly told either my supervising officers or fellow personnel about any of the sexually related incidents that occurred. ... I felt humiliated and to blame for what had occurred. I was too ashamed for anyone to know. I also thought I would be discharged from the Navy if anyone found out. I was confused and thought I might be considered to be a homosexual.
By contrast, female complainants who experienced sexual abuse or sexual harassment told the Taskforce that they did not make a report as it might contribute to rumours about their sexual behaviour or a reputation of being ‘easy’. For example, one female complainant described her reaction to an incident where a fellow officer crawled into her bed uninvited:

How could I go and get someone to help me get him out of my bed? They would think that I had sex with him. Remember, they had already given me the reputation of sleeping with pilots.

A number of complainants told the Taskforce that they were deterred from reporting as they felt in some way guilty for what had happened to them. One complainant told the Taskforce that she did not report ongoing harassment and bullying as ‘in my mind I thought I must deserve what was happening to me’. Another male complainant described similar feelings following an incident of sexual assault in the early 1970s:

I was far too ashamed and too frightened and confused to report the incident to anyone. ... I felt so dirty and ashamed and guilty as though, what [he] had said was true; I was to blame for being sexually assaulted. I felt very depressed, afraid and suicidal and it played heavily on my mind. ... I was terrified people would learn about what had happened to me.

By remaining silent, complainants ensured that no attention was drawn to them. However, many complainants told the Taskforce of the damaging long-term effects of not reporting abuse due to the associated stigma. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce, ‘I thought it would just go away but it never has’. Another stated:

I did not report it out of shame and embarrassment and the stigma attached. ... As such I simply bottled it up and as a result have suffered terribly.

Many complainants told the Taskforce that they felt unable to talk about what had happened to them for a long time after the abuse, even with close family and friends. In some cases, this silence contributed to ongoing feelings of guilt and shame, and put a strain on personal relationships. One complainant told the Taskforce that he discharged after only 44 days at the Royal Military College (RMC), and spent the rest of his life ‘determined to prove to myself and to my father that it was the military culture at RMC that was rotten to the core and that I was, in fact, fit to be in the military’. The same complainant further stated:

I carry these experiences with me every day and to this day I still feel embarrassment and shame about the ugliness of these events which crushed my spirit as a 16 year old. Throughout my life I have concealed the ignominious truth from my schoolmates and teachers, work and sporting colleagues, friends and family. I simply couldn’t bear the thought of revisiting the degrading humiliation and pain.

Last year, at age 75, I finally summoned the courage to divulge the sordid truth to my family. Time will not heal but may help us understand the massive impact that these life changing events have had on all of us.

Another complainant who experienced sexual abuse told the Taskforce that he was able to tell his father some, but not all, of the abuse he suffered:

Unfortunately, I was too ashamed to tell my dad all the graphic details of the sexual attacks. ... Shame and disgust, mingled with self-hatred is a very powerful deterrent to spilling your guts, even when it could save you.

(iv) Threats or a perceived risk of further abuse

A large number of complainants told the Taskforce that they did not report abuse due to either threats, or a perceived risk, of being subjected to further abuse. It is important to note that a fear of further abuse was neither unreasonable nor unfounded. Many complainants felt disinclined to make a report of abuse where they had either themselves been abused as retribution for making a prior report of abuse (as discussed in section 21.4(a) above), or knew or had witnessed others being abused as retribution for making a report. The following examples are representative of what many complainants described to the Taskforce as the implications of reporting abuse:

Anyone reporting an incident was bullied and harassed far more severely than we normally were so it seemed like a “suicide mission” to report anything to anyone. I was barely coping and did not want to make it even worse for myself so I just kept quiet about everything.
It was commonly accepted that if a member raised issues or made complaints, they would be penalised and punished by senior apprentices. For no apparent reason kangaroo courts were held and juniors punished. They had instilled in us complete and utter fear.111

A number of complainants described being directly threatened by the alleged abuser or other members with further abuse if they made a report. In particular, many complainants were explicitly threatened with physical violence, such as threats to beat up the complainant112 or death threats.113 For some complainants, these threats instilled a fear of reprisal that endured well after their service in Defence came to an end. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

I had been constantly told, “what goes on at Kapooka stays at Kapooka” and that if I ever told anyone anything about the abuse I had copped, I would be hunted down and flogged to death. I believed this for a very long time.114

Many complainants who experienced sexual abuse during their time serving on ships in the Navy told the Taskforce that they were deterred from reporting due to an actual fear of being thrown overboard.115 Other complainants who experienced sexual abuse told the Taskforce that they were threatened with further sexual violence or sexual harassment if they made a formal report. For example, one complainant stated that his alleged abuser threatened to ‘tell others I was a queer and up for it, then it would be a big problem for me’ if he reported an incident of sexual assault.116

A number of complainants also stated that although they reported some of the abuse, they did not disclose the full details of what occurred to them for fear of punishment. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce of a serious incident of physical and sexual assault that resulted in him being hospitalised. Though the complainant did report the physical abuse, he stated that he could not bring himself to report the sexual abuse:

I did not report the rape. At the time I was living in constant fear of reprisal should I report anything to anyone about the rape and also the connotations of divulging that information and the stigma attached to it. I knew that there were no witnesses and that would make it an issue of one person’s word against another and I kept it all bottled up inside me.117

[v] Threats or a perceived risk to career

Another explanation frequently given by complainants as to why they did not report abuse was that they were concerned about the effect reporting could have on future career opportunities and their career progression in Defence.

For many of these complainants, this concern arose in the context of abuse carried out by an alleged abuser or abusers of a significantly higher rank to the complainant. As such, many complainants felt that the risk to their career was implied:

I was sexually assaulted on four separate occasions by my Training Officer. ... As the Training Officer he had direct power over my naval career and could have me discharged by simply writing a bad report. I was young, naive and full of excitement at the prospect of life in the Navy and trusted everyone however that was to change.118

Another complainant who experienced sexual abuse, physical abuse, and harassment and bullying at the Army Apprentice School at Balcombe in the late 1960s told the Taskforce:

I did not raise these issues after leaving Balcombe as the retributions could include not being offered for trade courses, promotion courses and promotions. ... Even after all this time, I still feel apprehension about telling my story, as I feel there could be comebacks or reprisals.119

In some cases, complainants told the Taskforce that the alleged abuser or others used their authority to explicitly threaten the complainant with career ramifications in order to prevent the complainant from making a formal report of abuse. This involved threats to interfere with the complainants’ career progression,120 to take inappropriate or false disciplinary action against the complainant,121 or to dishonourably discharge the complainant.122 For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that her alleged abuser ‘blackmailed’ her by threatening to write a ‘never to be promoted’ note on her file if she did not go out with him.123 Another complainant described how her alleged abuser repeatedly threatened her in order to ensure compliance and to deter her from reporting:

[He] raped me, more than once, and held me against my will for a few hours. ... During the time I was being held by this man he continuously threatened my career, my credibility, the way my life would be affected. ... I was so very frightened I actually vomited.124
A number of complainants told the Taskforce that they felt reporting the abuse might not only impact their career progression, but may also have negative impacts on other people. This was particularly common in relation to female complainants who were among the early women to serve in Defence. Some of these complainants told the Taskforce that they felt reporting abuse might serve to undermine the overall credibility of women in Defence:

I was warned about saying anything to anyone. This was not unexpected, as I was often reminded that I was the first female [in my technical trade], and that if I didn’t fit in, or things didn’t work out, other females would not be allowed in my mustering.125

(b) Defence mismanagement where there was not an actual report of abuse

As discussed in section 21.1 above, it is not critical that an actual report of abuse was made to Defence in order for Defence mismanagement to be found by the Taskforce. In many cases, the Taskforce made a finding of mismanagement even though there was no actual report of abuse, but where there was a ‘constructive report’ of abuse. This arose where information available to the Taskforce indicated that Defence took no action in the following circumstances:

• where there was a pattern or practice of abuse such that Defence plausibly knew or ought to have known about the abuse and failed to stop or prevent it;
• where the abuse was effected by a person of seniority or higher rank to the complainant to whom the complainant could have otherwise reported the abuse;
• where the abuse was witnessed by a person in Defence in a position of seniority or higher rank but who took no steps to stop or prevent it; and/or
• where the complainant presented to a superior or other person in authority with signs of injury as ought reasonably to have given rise to concern that the complainant was being, or may have been, abused, and they failed to make any reasonable enquiry.

In the overwhelming majority of complaints where no formal report of abuse was made, the Taskforce made a finding of mismanagement on one or more of these bases.

It is also noteworthy that there is much overlap between the categories where there was plausibly a constructive report of abuse outlined above. In particular, in circumstances where the Taskforce made a finding that there was a pattern or practice of abuse which Defence reasonably knew about and failed to stop or prevent, it was sometimes implicit or explicit in complainants’ accounts that some or all of the abuse involved was witnessed by persons of seniority or higher rank. Similarly, in many complaints where the complainant presented to a superior with signs of injury and no action was taken, it is clear from complainants’ accounts that this occurred in a broader context of ongoing patterns and practices of abuse unofficially condoned by staff.

(i) Defence mismanagement in circumstances where there was a pattern or practice of abuse

I was 15 years and four months old when I commenced my career in the RAAF as an apprentice. … Inevitably, there was a strong emphasis on “warrior” ethos, qualities and characteristics. Thus, it was inevitable that this would manifest itself in a variety of ways in the hundreds of 15 to 18 year old apprentices exposed to this. … Let me make it clear that I have no complaint with the complex social interaction which would occur in any group of juveniles subject to these influences, even though, quite predictably, it often led to individual physical conflict. I do, however, have some complaint regarding the institutionalised systemic abuse that was tolerated [even celebrated] in the apprentice training scheme of that era.126

Where there was no actual report of abuse that was mismanaged, the Taskforce sometimes made a finding of Defence mismanagement on the basis that Defence plausibly knew or ought to have known of a pattern or practice of abuse at this location, and failed to take action to address the culture of abuse that existed within the particular Defence establishment or location.
This was particularly common in relation to complaints of abuse at recruit and employment training establishments. The majority of these complainants experienced abuse which occurred during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, usually when the complainant was very young and of a junior rank. Nearly all complaints involved male complainants, and often involved hazing or initiation practices carried out by groups of male alleged abusers in a senior intake to the complainant.

The majority of complaints where the Taskforce made a finding of mismanagement on the basis that Defence knew or ought to have known of a pattern or practice of abuse relate to recruit and employment training establishments. It should be noted that a very large number of complaints were received regarding the recruit training establishment, HMAS Leeuwin, for which the Taskforce has previously released the separate Report on abuse at HMAS Leeuwin. There were also a high number of complaints relating to HMAS Nirimba, as well as other Defence recruit and employment training establishments across services such as the Army Apprentice School, RMC, RAAF Base Wagga and RAAF Base Edinburgh. The Taskforce has also released a separate Report on abuse at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

A number of factors contributed to a finding that Defence plausibly knew or ought to have known of a pattern or practice of abuse at a particular Defence establishment. In many cases, complainants expressly stated that staff members at the relevant establishment were aware of widespread practices of abuse but turned a ‘blind eye’, sending a ‘clear message’ to the alleged abusers that their actions were condoned. For example, a number of complainants described the annual ‘Crab Night’ at the Army Apprentice School where senior apprentices would target junior intakes for ‘all sorts of terror’ during the night, including harassment and bullying, physical abuse and in some cases, serious sexual assault. Complainants described how staff members were aware of and condoned this event:

During the course of our introduction to the barracks, [the Platoon Sergeant] warned us that it was … “Crab Night”. At the time, I did not know what this meant. I later learned that 100 days before an intake graduates, they would have what was called “Crab Night”. We were warned by the Platoon Sergeant earlier in the day to lock ourselves in our huts after mess, but he did not say why.

Another complainant who served at HMAS Nirimba during the late 1960s told the Taskforce:

The behaviour of the senior apprentices was accepted by higher ranking officers and as a result there was no attempt to protect the junior apprentices from the brutal treatment. They had no protection from the bullying which was rampant. … [T]o be suddenly immersed in a culture of unfairness and brutality caused me to wonder why I had joined an organisation which accepted this brutish behaviour as the norm.

Complainants reported that abusive practices were often made worse by a noticeable lack of supervision by adult staff members, especially during the weekends and after dark, which provided the opportunity for senior intakes to carry out abuse unchecked. A number of complainants suggested this lack of supervision was deliberate, and that staff were ‘conveniently absent’ at times when abuse took place.

In some cases, complainants told the Taskforce that staff members actively encouraged patterns of abuse, as a ‘necessary’ means of toughening up or filtering out those that they deemed unsuited to Defence. One complainant told the Taskforce:

At the time, the perception amongst the first year apprentices [as a result of enquiries and complaints made] was that the officers at the base knew full well what was going on and condoned it. They always recruited more people than what they needed. Then they would allow this bullying on us and only take the ones who would put up with it. The others would drop out.

Another complainant described how instructors at RAAF Base Edinburgh viewed hazing or initiation practices among recruits as a legitimate training method:

The view of instructors was that [this] was a tool they used to break you into an Air Force mould. I witnessed a corporal [instructor] advise a group that a member [smelled]; that night they grabbed him and scrubbed him with a scrubbing brush and a broom; he was screaming throughout this ordeal. I didn’t trust anyone and it impacted me for many years.
Another contributing factor suggesting a pattern or practice of abuse existed at the relevant location was information available to the Taskforce which indicated that a number of other complainants had previously experienced very similar forms of abuse at the same location within the same time period, and either made a formal report of abuse or stated that supervisors were aware of the abuse. In these circumstances, the Taskforce made a finding that Defence was effectively put on notice of the abuse at that location. For example, 68 complainants told the Taskforce that they were made to participate in the practice of ‘running the gauntlet’ as a junior recruit at HMAS Leeuwin, which involved having to run along a corridor or staircase while being beaten with heavy items (often in pillowcases). A number of these complainants stated that this practice was so widespread, they felt staff must have known about it.136

This finding was strengthened in circumstances where there was extensive media coverage or formal inquiries that highlighted patterns of abuse occurring at the relevant establishment, of which staff should have been aware. For example, a series of media articles from 1983 described numerous incidents involving hazing or initiation practices at RMC, including a statement by the then Defence Minister that incidents of hazing or initiation were not ‘isolated cases’ but reflected a ‘wider pattern of conduct which has apparently become accepted as customary’.137 The then Defence Minister further stated that it was ‘clear to [him] that there have been a sufficient number of incidents involving excessive behaviour to indicate that at least some of the military staff at the college should have been aware of their existence, or at least aware of the existence of a significant proportion of these incidents’.138 In addition, a report conducted in 1970 (the ‘Fox Report’) highlighted allegations of ‘bastardisation’ at RMC, which suggests staff should have been on notice of the existence of hazing or initiation practices at RMC from 1970.139 The Taskforce received a number of complaints of abuse at RMC that occurred after this material was published, suggesting that patterns and practices of abuse continued even after Defence was made aware that it was occurring.

In some cases, the Taskforce made a finding of Defence mismanagement on the basis that Defence plausibly knew or ought to have known of a pattern or practice of abuse where the same alleged abuser was identified in multiple cases. This was particularly concerning where the repeat abuser was identified in complaints involving sexual abuse and was in a position of significant seniority or authority. For example, the Taskforce received eight different complaints alleging abuse by one specific staff member alone during the late 1960s. One complainant stated that he made a report about the behaviour of this staff member at the time of the abuse, however, as the other complaints demonstrate, it appears this report had little or no consequence as the staff member went on to abuse others.

(ii) Defence mismanagement where the abuse was carried out by a person of seniority or higher rank

How could I go to my chain of command to complain about this assault and injustice? It was my chain of command who orchestrated and executed this humiliation.140

In a large number of complaints, the Taskforce made a finding of mismanagement on the basis that some or all of the abuse was carried out by a person in a position of seniority or higher rank to whom the complainant would, or could, otherwise have reported the abuse.

This finding frequently arose throughout all Defence services. Abuse carried out by a superior was more likely to arise both in recruit and employment training establishments and during regular service, and to involve women as both complainants or alleged abusers.

In some cases, the alleged abuser was only marginally senior to the complainant, but nonetheless was someone to whom the complainant might otherwise have reported abuse. This was particularly common at recruit and employment training establishments such as HMAS Leeuwin, HMAS Nirima, the Army Apprentice School, RMC and RAAF Base Wagga, where senior apprentices or cadets were given honorific ranks or official positions of authority over newer intakes. Abuse carried out by staff apprentices or cadets generally occurred against a broader backdrop of widespread hazing or initiation practices. Some complainants told the Taskforce that senior apprentices or cadets given formal positions of responsibility were among the worst offenders. For example, many complainants described abuse at the Army Apprentice School which was instigated by senior apprentices given disciplinary authority as non-commissioned officers, who would act as ‘ringleaders’ for other senior apprentices while carrying out abuse.141 Another complainant who experienced abuse at RAAF Base Wagga during the late 1960s told the Taskforce:
At one stage, a senior apprentice... was made a resident in our block, ostensibly to prevent this happening. Unfortunately for us, [the senior apprentice] seemed to consider us as personal targets for him and his mates. Furthermore, a number of complaints involved an alleged abuser who was of a significantly higher rank to the complainant, such that there was a significant power imbalance between the alleged abuser and the complainant. In some of these cases, the power imbalance was exacerbated by a substantial age gap between the alleged abuser and the complainant. Of particular concern were numerous complaints involving sexual abuse where the alleged abuser was in a position of seniority or higher rank to the complainant.

As discussed in section 21.4(a) above, many complainants told the Taskforce that the alleged abuser misused their position of authority as means to enable the abuse or to deter the complainant from reporting abuse. As such, many complainants felt powerless to prevent abuse, as they felt their word would not be believed against that of a superior. A number of these complainants also felt that they could not report given the alleged abusers’ power over future career opportunities (see discussion in section 21.4(a)(v) above). Other complainants told the Taskforce that the hierarchy in Defence was so entrenched that there was simply no one else to report to (discussed in section 21.4(a)(ii) above).

In many cases, abuse carried out by a person of seniority or higher rank occurred while the complainant was alone with the alleged abuser. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that a Warrant Officer would continually make ‘unprofessional’ remarks to her while at work:

"It was normally making comments about my body and who wanted to sleep with me. He always made sure that this was said behind closed doors where no one else could hear it. ... I felt trapped in the situation and felt I had no one to turn to. I started feeling nauseous when it was time to go to work."

However, a number of complainants told the Taskforce that the abuse was deliberately orchestrated so it would be witnessed by the complainants’ peers or colleagues, so as to ostracise and humiliate the complainant. This was particularly common in relation to harassment and bullying. For example, multiple complainants who experienced abuse during recruit or employment training told the Taskforce that they were singled out for harassment and bullying by a training staff member during class, often involving verbal abuse or harsh disciplinary practices. In some cases, this acted as a signal for other recruits or trainees to target the complainant for further abuse after hours, such as a physical assault during the night.

Other complainants who experienced workplace harassment and bullying during regular service described how they were deliberately undermined and ridiculed in front of subordinates and students, or had their input belittled in front of other personnel. One complainant wrote a letter asking to be excused from attending a function due to a medical condition. She described the reaction of her supervising Sergeant as follows:

"Apparently, [the Sergeant] read my letter out in front of my peers when I was not there and ridiculed me. He visited me in the Regimental Aid Post... where I was working and read my letter out in front of me, my peers and patients waiting to be treated. He then said "I am going to approve it because I don’t really want to see your face there anyway.""

(iii) Defence mismanagement where the abuse was witnessed by a person of seniority or higher rank

The Taskforce made a finding of a constructive report of abuse where complainants stated that the abuse they experienced was witnessed by a person of seniority or higher rank, who took no steps to prevent the abuse or to intervene.

In these cases, complainants told the Taskforce that persons of seniority or higher rank witnessed the lead up to, parts of, or the entirety of the abuse, and were effectively aware of what the complainant and others experienced but chose to turn a ‘blind eye’. These cases usually overlapped with a finding of patterns or practices of abuse, discussed in section 21.4(b)(i) above.

A number of complainants stated that the abuse they experienced occurred in full view of a person in a position of seniority. Many of these complainants felt that by standing by and doing nothing, the superior sent a signal that they condoned the abuse. For example, one complainant who served in the Air Force during the late 1990s told the Taskforce...
that she experienced ongoing verbal abuse by a Lieutenant over a 45 minute period while other students and instructors were present, reducing her to tears. She was eventually approached by the Course Director, who congratulated her on not reacting further which had enabled him to avoid taking any action against the alleged abuser:

[T]he inaction of [the Course Director] left me with the impression that unacceptable behaviour was commonplace and tolerated in the Air Force and that I should ignore it. His negative comment and unwillingness to intervene reinforced what I had begun to realise was the pervasive “culture of silence” in the organisation.\(^{149}\)

In some instances, complainants described how witnesses of a higher rank stood by and laughed while the abuse took place.\(^{150}\) For example, one complainant described being tied to a tree with a hessian sack over his head during a training exercise in the late 1990s while someone pulled down his pants and played with his genitals using a stick:

Our Lieutenant and [our Sergeant] were present. ... In total there would have been a group of six or seven full time soldiers who took part in what happened. I could see through the hessian sack over my head, and could see that the Sergeant and the Lieutenant were laughing. ... I saw [the Sergeant] shortly after this event and he congratulated me on getting away down the hill so fast. I felt that he knew that what had happened was wrong and he was worried that he’d get in trouble for it.\(^{151}\)

In other cases, complainants reported that the person of a higher rank not only witnessed the abuse, but actively encouraged it – even though they did not otherwise carry out the abuse. One complainant told the Taskforce that he was repeatedly sexually assaulted over a three month period by a senior apprentice at HMAS Nirimba during the early 1970s, while an officer watched:

I felt someone behind me at this stage and I noticed an older man with grey hair standing there. I assume he was a senior officer. The senior apprentice then proceeded to put his fingers in my anus and moved it very hard in a “back and forth” motion while sucking my penis. The older man said “pretend you are masturbating” and just stood there watching.\(^{152}\)

Of particular note is the high number of female complainants who reported sexual harassment that was witnessed by a person of seniority or higher rank. Many of these complainants told the Taskforce that they felt the persons of seniority who witnessed sexual harassment either implicitly or explicitly condoned this treatment of women. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that after reporting sexual harassment to her supervisor, he did not reprimand the alleged abuser but would ‘laugh along’ with the alleged abuser’s sexist comments when they were made in his presence.\(^{153}\)

Another complainant who experienced ongoing sexual harassment at HMAS Cerberus in the early 1980s stated:

There were supervisors there at the time. They did and said nothing. It was “open season” on female sailors. ... This behaviour persisted for the entire time I was at recruit school.\(^{154}\)

(iv) Defence mismanagement where a person presented with signs of injury

In some cases, the Taskforce made a finding of mismanagement where the complainant presented to a staff member or person of seniority with unexplained physical or psychological injuries which should have been an indicator of abuse, and they failed to make any reasonable enquiry. This was most common in relation to physical or sexual abuse.

It is important to note that many of these cases occurred in a broader context of patterns or practice of abuse, where staff members or persons of seniority were effectively aware of abuse but chose to turn a ‘blind eye’. This is discussed in section 21.4(b)(iii) above.

Many complainants told that Taskforce that they were never questioned about the cause of their injuries. For example, at least 14 complainants from HMAS Leeuwin told the Taskforce that they presented to staff with signs of injury, but staff did not enquire as to how they were hurt. One complainant from HMAS Leeuwin described how a nurse reacted when he attended sick bay with bleeding and infection following an incident of sexual assault:

She told me to drop my pants and after examination, she said “I am not going to ask you what caused this”. She said I had two options, I could fill out a sick bay form and see the doctor or I could leave the sick bay which she said for my own sake would be the better thing to do. ... She said to me it was a dischargeable offence if I was involved in any homosexual act and I would be sent home with a dishonourable discharge that would affect me for the rest of my life. She said that those types of things did not happen at Leeuwin or in the Navy. She gave me a tube of cream, I returned to my group and carried on the rest of the day as normal.\(^{155}\)
Other complainants told the Taskforce that they felt pressured to falsely report the circumstances of their injuries in order to cover up the abuse, and their false report was readily accepted by a superior without enquiring any further. Many of these complainants implied that they felt that the superior they presented to was not convinced by their explanation, but made a conscious decision to avoid learning more about the circumstances of their injuries.156 One complainant told the Taskforce:

Regardless of whether or not junior class apprentices received treatment, the unwritten rule was “NEVER DOB” and therefore many injuries, effects, especially sore ribs, adverse bruising, etc, were treated as football related causations or “slipped in the showers”/“ran into a door”/“slipped down stairs”.157

3 Department of Defence, Complaint Resolution, above.
4 Female Trainee, [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].
5 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
6 See, for example, Female Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Lieutenant, HMAS Anzac, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1980s, [Name redacted].
7 See, for example, Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftman, Simpson Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
8 Female Staff Cadet, ADFA, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
9 See, for example, Male Seaman, HMAS Stalwart, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, Larrakeyah Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
10 Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
11 Female Private, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
12 Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
13 See, for example, Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].
14 Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].
15 Male Able Seaman, HMAS Cerberus, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
16 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].
17 Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
18 Female Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
19 Male Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
20 Male Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
21 See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], RAAF Base Williams, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
22 Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].
23 Female Sergeant, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], RAAF Base Williams, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
24 See, for example, Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
25 Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
26 See, for example, Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female Corporal, RAAF Base Williamtown, late 1990s to early 2000s, [Name redacted].
27 See, for example, Female Recruit, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Corporal, Lone Pine Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Corporal, [Location redacted], late 1990s to early 2000s, [Name redacted].
28 Female Recruit, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
29 Female Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
30 Female Recruit, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
31 Female Recruit, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
32 Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
33 Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
34 Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
35 Female Private, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
36 See, for example, Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Success, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
37 Male Seaman, HMAS Success, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
38 Female Private, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
39 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
40 See, for example, Female Corporal, RAAF Base Glenbrook, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Lieutenant, HMAS Anzac, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
41 Female Corporal, RAAF Base Amberley, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Corporal, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
42 See, for example, Male Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Corporal, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
43 See, for example, Male Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Lieutenant, HMAS Anzac, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
44 Female Corporal, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
45 Female Corporal, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
46 See, for example, Female Staff Cadet, ADFA, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
47 Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Corporal, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
48 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].
49 Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
50 Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
51 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
53 See, for example, Female Staff Cadet, ADFA, late 1990s, [Name redacted].
54 See, for example, Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Corporal, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
55 Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
56 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].
57 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
58 Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
59 Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1980s, [Name redacted].
60 Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
61 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
62 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
63 Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].
64 Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted].
65 See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].
66 See, for example, Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 2000s, [Name redacted].
67 Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 2000s, [Name redacted].
See, for example, Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female Private, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female Recruit, [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Female Staff Cadet, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Melbourne II, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Laverton, early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, late 1950s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Anzac, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted]; Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Seaman, HMAS Anzac, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Sergeant, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1950s, [Name redacted].

Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1950s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
Male Private, Holsworthy Barracks, late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Cadet, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Recruit, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male [Rank redacted], HMAS Melbourne, late 1950s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, early 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female Private, [Location redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Leading Aircraftman, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].

Female Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Female Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], RAAF Base Amberley, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Aircraftwoman, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1990s, [Name redacted].

Female Private, Puckapunyal Military Area, late 1970s, [Name redacted].

Aircraftman, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Female Recruit, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Recruit, RAAF Base Edinburgh, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1970s, [Name redacted].


Above.


Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, RAAF Base Wagga, late 1960s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Female Private, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Seaman, HMAS Sydney, late 1960s, [Name redacted]; Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female Recruit, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female Recruit, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].

See, for example, Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted]; Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Female [Rank redacted], RAAF Base Williamtown, early 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Sergeant, [Location redacted], late 2000s, [Name redacted].

Male Corporal, RAAF Base Richmond, late 2000s, [Name redacted]; Female Private, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
Female [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Female Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted]; Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Female Private, Lavarack Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].

Female Recruit, HMAS Cerberus, early 1980s, [Name redacted].

Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, early 1970s, [Name redacted]; Male Junior Recruit, HMAS Leeuwin, early 1970s, [Name redacted].

Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].
22. Impacts of abuse on complainants

How has the incident impacted my life? To this day the impact cannot be measured but is still felt far too often. It has shaped much of whom I now am and all that I do. I suffered chronic depression as a result and even attempted suicide when at my lowest point. I was diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder ... and it is evident to this day. I still have ongoing self-esteem, anxiety and depression issues. ... I was scared of everything. I can recall hiding in my cupboard or sitting up at night on my bedside table with my back against the corner of the room. I was afraid to breathe and the tick-tock of the clock was deafening. I was placed on various depression/anxiety medications, with varying results. ... Nowadays – I find it difficult to keep jobs and am unable to work five days per week. I struggle to maintain focus and seem to operate at a constantly heightened level of stress. I still suffer the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety and depression to varying degrees.1

Complainants to the Taskforce reported that the abuse they experienced had a significant impact on various aspects of their lives and careers, both at the time of the abuse and for years afterwards. The impact of abuse for many complainants has been ongoing, often affecting their daily lives.

The short-term impacts of abuse described by complainants included physical injuries such as bruises, broken limbs and other injuries, sometimes requiring hospitalisation; psychological impacts that were sometimes associated with feelings of fear, shame and powerlessness; addictions; and impacts on their careers as a result of time off work, isolation, negative attention and inappropriate responses to the abuse.

Many complainants also reported long-term impacts that they continue to struggle with today, including continuing physical injuries; addictions; psychological impacts such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), major depressive disorders and anxiety; challenges in personal relationships; negative impacts on their social life; negative career progression; and financial consequences.

22.1 Impacts at the time of the abuse

Many complainants told the Taskforce that they experienced a range of significant physical and psychological impacts at the time of the abuse. At times, the immediate impact was exacerbated by their young age, junior rank, isolation from family, friends and adequate support, not being able to report the abuse, or not having their report of abuse adequately addressed by Defence. This often led to negative impacts in the workplace, as well as alcohol or substance abuse problems.

(a) Physical injuries

Many complainants recounted the physical injuries they experienced as a result of the abuse, ranging from minor scratches or bruising to much more severe injuries requiring hospitalisation.

Physical injuries often resulted from the various forms of physical and sexual abuse complainants were subjected to, including being punched, bashed, forced to participate in physical activities against medical advice, or sexually assaulted.

A number of complainants told the Taskforce of physical injuries resulting from hazing or initiation practices, for example, cuts and bruises caused by being beaten with heavy items while 'running the gauntlet'; cuts to the skin caused from being scrubbed with brushes, steel wool, or other abrasive objects; and severe pain caused by having a vacuum cleaner applied to their genitals.

For example, one complainant described his injuries after various incidents of hazing:

I was subjected to initiation ceremonies, carried out by older apprentices. I was stripped naked and black shoe polish was applied to my private parts. I was then tied up in a bag and thrown under a cold shower. ... On one occasion, I was stabbed whilst working in the workshop at a bench vice. I was stabbed from behind with a very sharp workshop tool. I believe this was an apprentice prank gone wrong. I passed out and woke to find my lower spine bleeding. I was hospitalised for the day.2
Complainants who were subjected to various forms of sexual abuse spoke of suffering a range of disturbing physical injuries, including significant pain caused by having a foreign object, such as a broom handle, inserted into their anus; burns and cuts caused by having boot polish and other substances forcibly applied to their genitals; and a range of physical injuries after experiencing particularly violent acts of sexual assault.

For example, a complainant who was physically and sexually assaulted and rendered unconscious reported:

I was asleep in bed ... when I was attacked by four sailors in the middle of the night. ... I was kicked and punched repeatedly. ... I was still somewhat cloudy because of the blows to the head when he raped me. ... When this had finished and they had left, I finally came around. I struggled to get out of bed and to the base hospital. It was about half a mile from the sleeping barracks and somehow I managed to walk myself there. I entered the hospital, was admitted and given a bed. I was in [the hospital] for a couple of weeks after these incidents. I was black and blue all over and in a lot of pain. I did not seek any hospital treatment for the rape. I started self-harming myself at the base hospital. ... I was 19 years of age at the time of the assaults.1

While physical injuries commonly resulted from physical or sexual abuse, complainants also told the Taskforce of physical impacts after having been subjected to harassment and bullying or sexual harassment. For example, one complainant recounted her experience when confronted while on deployment overseas:

By the time I had straightened up and turned to look at him ... he left his seat and advanced quickly up the aisle and was almost on top of me. He was red in the face and glaring. He spat on me and, leaning into me to the point where I raised my rifle to fend him off, he hissed that he would “smash my fucking face in” if I ever spoke to him like that again in front of his peers. I was genuinely worried that he was about to physically strike me so I raised my rifle in a two handed grip to push him away. My face was covered in spittle where he has spat on me and then sprayed my face further when threatening me. ... I was shaking and I felt physically sick. ... I was hyperventilating and in tears.4

Another complainant recounted how she was pushed to the point of exhaustion and injury as a result of ongoing harassment and bullying by a superior:

[The Corporal] made me stand on the parade ground in the hot sun until I fainted, while everyone else sat in the shade. He would make me do push ups in rain soaked puddles so I would have to go and clean my uniform. ... I began to suffer tendinitis in my legs throughout the training, and he would not let me stay in the sickbay long enough to recover. He came to the sick bay, banged on the door and yelled “Get out of there and get back to your course”. At this time I couldn’t walk properly but I had to get out of the sick bay and do what I could, even though I was in constant pain.5

Some complainants sought immediate medical assistance for their injuries, however many others, often ashamed of the abuse, hid the physical harm caused and attempted to address the injuries themselves.

(b) Psychological impacts

Many complainants spoke of significant psychological impacts that they experienced at the time of the abuse. Complainants often stated they felt isolated or ‘constantly on edge and in fear’. At times, these psychological impacts meant that they avoided talking about their experiences. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

The only way I could deal with all this abuse was to internalise it and become emotionally numb. There was no family or friends to confide in, to do so with others aboard was to show your vulnerability that would only end in more abuse.7

Some complainants did not share their experiences with others because they thought that no one would believe them. This was particularly the case if the complainant was of a more junior rank to the alleged abuser or abusers at the time of the abuse. This situation often left complainants feeling betrayed, powerless or distrustful. For example, a complainant who experienced physical and sexual abuse, as well as harassment and bullying recounted:

I tried to change employment but as an Ordinary Seaman under training it was not a simple thing to do and needed [the Lieutenant’s] agreement and he refused. I lived in total fear and shame. I started to isolate myself from others as much as I could and would drink to try and make the feelings go away but they didn’t. [I] did not trust anyone and became quite anxious if in a confined space.8
A number of complainants told the Taskforce that after experiencing abuse, they avoided work or considered going Absent Without Official Leave (AWOL). A complainant who was subjected to sexual harassment and harassment and bullying told the Taskforce:

I was really scared to report what [the Sergeant] was doing, but I couldn't go on being treated like this any more so I reported it to [the Major]. ... He never told [the Sergeant] to stop making those sorts of jokes or that it was inappropriate. He never took any action against [the Sergeant] and never did anything to help me. My complaint was not only ignored, but [the Sergeant] found out that I'd made it and made my life even worse after that. This issue consumed me. I was anxious and depressed and could barely drag myself out of bed to go to work. I couldn't bear having to put up with [the Sergeant's] behaviour at one point I even considered going AWOL to get away from him. Every single day I would think about the day that I would finally get to leave the Army. It was incredibly overwhelming.9

Another complainant described the isolation, helplessness and feelings of shame he experienced prior to going AWOL:

As a result of these incidents of sexual abuse, physical abuse and deprivation, and bullying and harassment that I experienced constantly throughout my eight to nine months in the Army, I felt helpless and utterly unsupported. There was no one to turn to and no complaint mechanisms in place. The only way to make it stop, to my mind, was to go AWOL and this is what I did. ... I had been in the Army for a total of 10 months before going AWOL.

I felt completely disillusioned, isolated and my self-esteem had been devastated. I was also incredibly angry. I felt ashamed and was afraid to discuss what I had been through with anyone. At one point after being discharged I went to see a counsellor but I didn't keep it up as I found it difficult to articulate and share my experiences in this type of setting.10

Some complainants told the Taskforce of experiencing suicidal thoughts or attempts to end their lives as a result of the abuse. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

I was suicidal around the time of the sexual assault ... and also during and after all the investigations. I was extremely distressed and anxious. It was a horrendous ordeal and I have suffered incredibly ever since.11

(c) Resort to alcohol or other substances

I was hyper vigilant, unsettled, sleeping poorly and drinking excessively.12

Many complainants told the Taskforce of resorting to alcohol or other substance abuse as a means of ‘escaping’ from the memories of the abuse they suffered. For example, a complainant who was subjected to multiple sexual assaults when he was 17 and 18 years old, told the Taskforce:

I recall being physically sick afterwards at having to touch the old man’s penis. It was a disgusting ordeal to have to go through. Words fail to describe my predicament adequately! I would often vomit in the shower afterwards as I scrubbed myself clean in the hope that I would wash the shame and disgust away.

It had such an effect on me that I began to drink heavily in an effort to dull the pain I had to live through, and to stop it constantly running through my head.13

Another complainant reported that he started drinking as a direct consequence of his abuse. He was ordered by an intoxicated superior to exercise in his underwear to the point of exhaustion and was punched, kicked and threatened with physical abuse and death. This complainant had no experience with alcohol before this time. He told the Taskforce:

I was very young and quite small 64kg, from that time on I have had personal problems, I started drinking (I had never drunk before that time). I started smoking cigarettes. I didn’t want to be in the Navy anymore. I started to have dreams of being in a very small room and scared of what was outside. I still have these dreams about every fortnight that leave me scared for days after. I now know this incident has affected my life in so many ways.14

Some complainants mentioned that the substance abuse flowed from feelings of fear and lack of trust. For example, a complainant who was sexually assaulted multiple times by a superior said:

After this I found it difficult to trust anyone particularly my superiors and would become afraid if left alone with someone else. I started drinking heavily and my attitude and behaviour deteriorated. I lived a life of fear.15
The use of alcohol also impacted on many complainants’ performance at work:

In the period following the abuse, I began drinking heavily. My performance ... went downhill. I began to suffer disciplinary issues as a result of my alcohol consumption.16

Another complainant who was pressured to withdraw his complaint after ‘a traumatic rape’17 reported:

After this I completely lost all respect for officers because of the pressure to withdraw the complaint. I wanted to get out of the Navy and started not reporting for duty, drinking heavily and smoking marijuana regularly to block out the incident and the pain it caused me. I then began to get into trouble and the disciplinary problems increased according as my behaviour and attitude deteriorated due to the treatment I received. ... I had moments where I would be walking down the street and would see the person who abused me only for it not to be him at all. My temper was noted as getting worse to the point of becoming quite aggressive.18

(d) Impacts at work

For a number of complainants, the abuse they suffered had a significant impact on their career and ability to function effectively in a work environment. For many complainants, immediate physical injuries or psychological impacts resulted in needing to take time off work. Other complainants reported that their focus and achievements began to decline as a result of the abuse. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

The immediate result of the bullying was that I found my studies and goals to achieve went out the window. I felt that I had deserved better, as I had achieved top of my class in [some] subjects and the Captain's Commendations for that. My self-esteem and emotions suffered. I had no encouragement from anyone.19

For many, the abuse led them to be fearful or feel shame and as a result, they sought to isolate themselves from others. As one complainant told the Taskforce, soon after experiencing physical and sexual abuse:

I couldn’t return to my mess deck because of [the Leading Seaman] so I found a hose locker ... and hid out there while not on watch. I spent a lot of time on my own during the remainder of the cruise. I was very fearful that these bastards would pull this caper on me again. ...

Although I came across a couple of other Ordinary Seamen who had had problems with these blokes plus others of even higher rank, we were ords lower than the low in Naval lore so who would believe us anyway? I had grave fears at this stage of the Navy’s protective mechanism. I was living in terror. It had changed me and my outlook on my naval career.20

Some complainants described being ostracised as a result of having experienced abuse or due to rumours among their peers about what had occurred. At times, complainants who reported abuse became the target of further abuse. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

I was hated by everyone, like I was a bad guy for going to the military police.21

Complainants commonly received negative attention for making a report of the abuse. For example, one complainant who was sexually abused and sexually harassed one evening by a male of a more senior rank told the Taskforce:

The next day numerous persons came to me and asked if I was ok, apparently the incident was the talking point between members of the unit and everyone was aware of it, this made me feel extremely uncomfortable, as I didn’t want to be the focus of attention prior to deployment to a war zone. ... I remember several people coming up to me during the day and asking if I was ok, I remember feeling numb on the inside but outwardly I was showing that I was strong and shrugged it off and put it out of my mind like it never happened. It was at this point my life changed for the worse, although I didn’t at the time realise how much the incident would affect me.22

Many complainants reported that the abuse they suffered – particularly where it was carried out by people of more senior rank than the complainant or where a report of abuse had not been adequately addressed – changed their views about Defence and authority more generally. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that while the alleged abusers were sentenced to imprisonment for serious physical assault, their sentences were subsequently suspended. This result not only meant that the alleged abusers continued to subject the complainant to abuse, but also impacted upon the complainant’s relationship with superiors and led to feelings of disappointment in the Navy itself:
They were therefore still at [the base], and continued to make threats toward me. I felt very let down by the Navy, firstly for allowing these events to occur, and secondly for taking no real action to prevent it from happening again. I felt the sentence was very light and that no care was taken to protect us from further abuse.

On subsequent postings to ships and shore bases, I was always getting into strife with my superiors, as I had lost all respect for them and felt they didn’t care what happened to me.23

One complainant who received no response to a formal report of physical and sexual abuse told the Taskforce:

I lost trust in the protective mechanism of the Navy. I lost trust in the full system. I felt trapped not knowing who to trust in most situations so I became a loner spending large lengths of time alone and still do.24

22.2 Longer-term impacts

These incidents led me to a life of alcohol abuse and post-traumatic stress which have not only shortened my working life but impaired my ability to provide for my family and their future.25

While some complainants who suffered abuse told the Taskforce that they were able to pursue successful careers in Defence and enjoy lasting and secure personal relationships, many complainants indicated that the abuse had enduring negative impacts on their lives. These included ongoing physical injuries, psychological impacts and substance addictions, family breakdowns and the disintegration of personal relationships. The abuse also had financial implications for complainants as a result of decreased earning capacity and stalled career progress.

Many complainants suffered multiple long-term impacts as a result of the abuse that they experienced. For example, one complainant who was subjected to sexual abuse in the Navy told the Taskforce:

Over the years since being discharged I have received medical treatment for depression, stomach ulcers and other stress related illnesses. I continue to be plagued by a number of health problems all related to my service and my subsequent alcohol and drug abuse. My marriage failed due to my heavy drinking and volatile moods, and I have continued to cope by abusing alcohol. ... This incident has ruined the best part of my life. I will never get these years back.26

(a) Physical injuries

Some complainants told the Taskforce of having suffered physical injuries at the time of the abuse, which have then had ongoing and lasting impacts including chronic pain, mobility limitations and long-term medical treatment costs. In some cases, these physical impacts have affected their ability to work or secure employment. For example, one complainant described the ongoing physical impacts of the abuse he experienced as follows:

He never assaulted me to the point where I needed medical attention, however I did develop a neck complaint, from the constant headlocks that he insisted on putting me into whenever he felt like it, this still causes me pain even today.27

Complainants also experienced physical manifestations of the ongoing psychological distress they felt after experiencing abuse. These included nightmares and sleeping difficulties. One complainant told the Taskforce: ‘Since my time [in the Navy] I have become a negative thinker and regularly suffer stressful nightmares.’28 Another complainant told the Taskforce that his frequent nightmares often impact upon his partner’s sleeping patterns:

I have horrible dreams all the time. I do not sleep well because I cannot control the nightmares. I often wake myself or my partner by tossing and turning and/or crying in my sleep.29

In another example, a complainant described how the psychological impacts of the abuse they experienced have manifested in a number of physical ways:

I also developed significant epigastric pain and vomiting. Through treatment, I became aware that this is related to my psychological illness. ... I have been diagnosed with Irritable Bowel Syndrome, and this causes me ongoing symptoms, including stomach pain, vomiting, diarrhoea, bloating and constipation. I also get dizzy spells and the stress has brought on a heart condition.30
(b) Psychological impacts

The two and a half years of relentless abuse has left me with a plethora of psychological problems. A significant number of complainants told the Taskforce of ongoing psychological impacts they have experienced since the time of the abuse. As one complainant reported:

My Army service has emotionally scarred me. I have been diagnosed with severe chronic mental health conditions that continue to date.

Many complainants told the Taskforce that they have not been able to forget the abuse they were subject to and that memories of it have remained with them today. A number of complainants told the Taskforce they had never spoken of the abuse they experienced until they contacted the Taskforce. In some cases, this has led to decades of unspoken suffering. For example, one complainant who experienced sexual abuse as well as harassment and bullying told the Taskforce: ‘I cannot, even to this day, talk to my husband about what happened.’

One complainant communicated his experience of sexual abuse in the form of a poem:

I said nothing for over 30 years, until a student, in the class I taught, showed me the way, spoke of being raped by his father, and my tongue was untied, and I spoke my truth also.

Another complainant told the Taskforce about his experience of breaking his silence after six decades:

Last year, at age 75, I finally summoned the courage to divulge the sordid truth to my family. Time will not heal but may help us understand the massive impact that these life changing events have had on all of us.

A complainant who experienced abuse in the 1970s stated: ‘After 43 years I still constantly think about the abuse I suffered. Abuse I did not deserve.’ Another complainant who experienced abuse beginning in the 1960s told the Taskforce: ‘I have tried to forget most of this abuse but the more painful memories still remain some 40 years later as if they were yesterday.

Complainants told the Taskforce of their ongoing struggles with nervousness, low self-esteem and low self-confidence. As one complainant who experienced years of abuse said:

I have extremely low self-esteem and a huge lack of confidence which was destroyed from my experiences in the Defence Forces.

Complainants also frequently reported their ongoing feelings of anger, resulting in aggressive outbursts or violent reactions and mood swings. One complainant who was subjected to sexual and physical abuse told the Taskforce:

I suffered anger management issues at the thought of being violated and taken advantage of by a person of trust and of supposed good character.

Another complainant stated: ‘I was also prone to violent overreactions, resulting in my involvement in fights and assaults.

Many complainants told the Taskforce that they had been diagnosed, and have lived for many years, with conditions such as PTSD, major depressive disorders, bi-polar disorder and anxiety conditions. This has meant that many complainants have required ongoing medical and psychological support, as well as support from their family and friends. As one complainant who was subjected to physical and sexual abuse as well as harassment and bullying reported:

I am still a very nervous person and I have been receiving treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. ... I currently see a psychiatrist a couple of times a month and it takes a great deal of support from my wife to get by. I think that had I been told that I had this condition and was given treatment and support at the time I may be a lot better now.
For some, their psychiatric conditions have resulted in hospitalisation:

I have had a number of hospitalisations for stress related illness as well as breakdowns and suffer from depression, anxiety, panic attacks and compound PTSD.42

Some complainants reported that for years following the abuse, they struggled with thoughts of self-harm or suicide, and other complainants have attempted suicide on one or more occasions. For example, one complainant reported:

Later while serving ... I had terrible nightmares and flashbacks and the treatment aboard that ship was disgusting and only served to reinforce my self fear and loathing, on more than one occasion I thought of jumping over the side to escape my tormenters.43

(c) Resort to alcohol or other substances

After my medical discharge, I drank and took drugs for many years to try and drown out my memories.44

A significant number of complainants drank alcohol to excess as a means of coping with or suppressing their memories of abuse. In addition to alcohol abuse, complainants reported that they smoked cigarettes to excess or engaged in drug use as a result of the abuse they suffered. For example, one complainant who was subjected to sexual abuse recounted:

After leaving the Navy I ... became involved with some unsavoury people and abused alcohol and marijuana on a continual basis in an effort to deal with the issues in my head.45

In a number of cases, this substance abuse has also had physical, emotional and social impacts for complainants. One complainant stated:

I have used alcohol as a means of medicating my anxieties to the extent that I have become quite tolerant of the effects of alcohol. My abuse of alcohol most likely led to the onset of the Type 2 Diabetes I now suffer.46

Another complainant described how alcohol has impaired his ability to control his anger:

I also get very violent when touched in any way that feels aggressive or threatening. I have instinctively attacked good friends and family because of this. I find it hard to control these feelings when I'm sober, and as soon as I have a drink or two I am unable to control my temper.47

(d) Personal relationships and social impacts

I have and still suffer from depression, anxiety and [Obsessive Compulsive Disorder] and have feelings of isolation and problems within my family to the extent that I have had three unsuccessful marriages and a number of broken relationships. ... I find it hard to make decisions on my own and hard to motivate myself to participate in events and with others except where I have some confidence. The resulting stress affects my quality of life to the point of feeling disabled. It also inhibits my ability to live a functionally balanced and happy life.48

Many complainants told the Taskforce that the ongoing physical, psychological and financial problems they have experienced as a result of the abuse they experienced in Defence has impacted on their personal relationships and social interactions. As noted above, some complainants have never spoken about the abuse they experienced, even to family and friends. Many complainants described relationship breakdowns that occurred as a result of the abuse they suffered:

Since my discharge I have struggled to maintain intimate relationships. Throughout my life to date I have had two failed marriages and two failed de facto relationships.49

Another complainant stated:

I live on my own, I have been married twice but find it hard to hold down a regular relationship. I have problems with my adult children. In fact I don’t even know where they live. Through my drinking and behaviour I have been dropped more times than a school bag that’s how it goes, it’s a trust issue really.50

Many complainants also reported that after experiencing abuse, they felt unable to trust people. One complainant stated:

I have never been able to maintain a relationship. It just gets to a certain point and then I just freak out. I can’t trust anyone.51
Complainants who experienced sexual abuse or sexual harassment often described subsequent impacts to their sexual relationships. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

Due to the overtly sexual nature of the comments and behaviours I was exposed to … I have suffered sexual dysfunction. I cannot approach sex from any space other than it being sordid and dirty.52

Complainants also reported difficulties in forming friendships with people of the same sex as their alleged abuser. As one complainant who had been abused by a number of male alleged abusers stated: ‘I am generally scared and mistrustful of men and do not have any male friends.’53

Another complainant who was physically and sexually abused by male alleged abusers told the Taskforce:

I have no male friends. … I do not socialise at all and I couldn’t and still cannot go to parties, pubs or clubs for fear of being in a crowded space surrounded by people I do not know. I am now a very homophobic person and also have a specific hatred for men who dress as women.56

Male complainants also reported difficulties with hugging, shaking hands or making eye contact with men or feeling as though they would react violently if another man were to touch them. Other complainants reported feeling scared, intimidated or nervous around men.

Similarly, many female complainants who had been abused by male alleged abusers reported that they were afraid of males and found it difficult to get close to them. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce:

I have no social life and have never dated since these incidents as I do not trust men and do not like anyone touching me. I always dress down to ensure I receive no male attention.55

These impacts have had wide-ranging consequences on the social lives of complainants have been wide ranging as well. Many complainants reported that they struggle with being in crowds and being around unfamiliar people, with other complainants stating: ‘My social life is non-existent.’56

In contrast to the complainants who were socially isolated, other complainants mentioned their fear of being alone, with one complainant stating: ‘I hate to be alone and get very depressed when I have too much time by myself.’57

Often the impacts of the abuse were exacerbated by external factors. Some complainants reported being upset or troubled by viewing abuse in movies or television shows, or media coverage of violence or coverage about abuse in Defence. Some complainants found reminders of the abuse they experienced in other ways. For example, one complainant stated:

I cannot have any fans in the house no matter how hot it is and also no matter how uncomfortable it may feel for others. On one occasion we had to leave a restaurant because there was air blowing on me from behind, this dredged up memories from the experience of the old man breathing on me as I was being assaulted.58

Some complainants also acknowledged that reporting their experiences of abuse to the Taskforce or other organisations was a very difficult experience.

(e) Career impacts

I have been unable to gain full-time employment and have suffered a great deal of financial stress.59

Many complainants told the Taskforce that the abuse they suffered has had long-term impacts on their careers. Some reported that they found it difficult to continue working in Defence after being abused and sought discharge, while other complainants were discharged from Defence against their wishes.

One complainant who was discharged on medical grounds, told the Taskforce:

I firmly believe that this incident led to my discharge from the ADF. This decision still upsets me as I was dedicated to a long future with the ADF. … I have a strong dedication to the ADF and still have today, but my career was taken away from me and I will never again get it back.60
Many complainants told the Taskforce that they were targeted or punished for speaking out about abuse or other issues, and some complainants believe that their decision to speak out ended their careers within Defence. For example, one complainant told the Taskforce that his career ended after he was subjected to abuse for reporting the inappropriate behaviour of a fellow recruit:

I am a fucking pensioner at the age of 40. All because that guy pissed on his bed and I spoke up about it. I wish I could have kept my mouth shut.61

Complainants expressed their sadness over the loss of their Defence careers. Many had dreamed of lifelong careers in Defence, but were unable to continue working in the Defence workforce as a result of the abuse. As one complainant stated:

I was devastated that my prospective career was ruined, and I have struggled with full-time employment since.62

A number of complainants told the Taskforce about the impact the abuse they experienced has had on their ability to maintain regular employment. One complainant who was subjected to physical and sexual abuse, as well as harassment and bullying, told the Taskforce:

I did not work for the first year following discharge, and have not kept a job barely a year since my discharge. I find it hard to hold down a job to this day due to the trauma I experienced in the military. I am unable to handle conflict of any kind. I become irate and defensive when I feel someone is talking down to or criticising me. During these moments I often resort to yelling or swearing, and almost always end up crying, which worsens the situation.63

Some complainants also identified stress as a common factor that prevented them from maintaining steady employment. For example, one complainant reported:

[O]f recent my condition has worsened and I am now unfit to work at all. I don’t cope at all with any sort of stress and my home life has been affected greatly.64

Many complainants noted that ongoing physical injuries, psychological impacts and substance addictions stood in the way of gaining employment. As one complainant stated: ‘I found that as a result of my psychological distress, I was unable to maintain employment.’65 Another complainant spoke of the effect of his ongoing memories on his ability to engage in work, stating: ‘[I] have not been able to work for the past 10 years as the events of those years have continued to haunt me.’66

As a result of ongoing unemployment, some complainants reported significant financial stress after having exhausted their savings:

As a result of the abuse, my working life was cut short by many years. I have had to spend all of my superannuation funds to survive and have had no further superannuation funds accumulated since I left my last job. ... My financial security going forward is at best shaky, and my wife and I have had to learn to get by without much.67

One complainant who deserted from the Navy as a mechanism for coping with the abuse he suffered told the Taskforce:

The impact of this abuse and later emotional abuse by sadistic supervisors while serving ... led to my desertion from the Navy for three months during that time resulting to a loss of two years service toward my pension. I now have a reduced pension because of this incident directly related to the sexual abuse and bastardisation. I have suffered both emotionally and financially as a consequence of the unwanted actions of my supervisor.68

(f) Changed views of Defence and authority

I blame the culture of the military in allowing this to occur despite my protestations to senior officers and [non-commissioned officers] and their failure to intervene and assist me when my lifelong dream was being systematically destroyed.69

A number of complainants told the Taskforce that because of the abuse they experienced – and sometimes because of the way in which their reports of abuse were handled – they continue to experience disappointment, anger and fear towards Defence. Some of these complainants noted that while they were proud of their Defence service, they were not able to forget how they were treated. Others reported that they are unable to talk about Defence or their experiences in Defence without becoming upset. Some complainants mentioned that seeing people in military uniform – or even when people wear a lot of a colour associated with Defence – caused anxiety, fear and, sometimes, anger.
Complainants who were young at the time of the abuse often felt that Defence could and should have done more to protect them:

I still feel anger towards the Army for placing me as a 17 year old in such an unregulated and abusive environment where there was no support available and no one to turn to. As a 17 year old I did not have the coping mechanisms to deal with the treatment and incidents I experienced in the military.70

While some complainants reported that they struggled with authority shortly after the abuse, many complainants stated that they have continued to struggle with authority long after the abuse occurred. This was particularly the case where the alleged abuser held a more senior rank than the complainant. This fear of authority often impacted upon their long-term employment. As one complainant stated:

Even today I find it very difficult to be confident around any authority figure. There are lots of people I don’t trust.71

Another complainant was subjected to multiple types of abuse from the time he enlisted in the Army as a recruit at 17 years old. This abuse was perpetrated by multiple alleged abusers, including those of more senior ranks and a religious authority figure. He told the Taskforce:

I have had a constant fear of authority and a feeling that someone who is “in charge” of me is going to hurt me in some way. This has had a significant detrimental effect on my ability to hold down a job, or any form of employment including volunteer work.72

Some complainants also reported that they found it difficult to accept criticism. One complainant stated:

After leaving the Navy … I worked for two companies … and while I was good at my job, I continued to distrust anyone who had control over my life. On many occasions I reacted badly to criticism, to the point that I resigned from both of those jobs.73

In a further example, a complainant noted that his long-term health has been adversely affected due to his distrust of the medical profession, having been subjected to abuse at the hands of a medical practitioner during his service in Defence:

The experience I had with the Army doctor has left me with feeling of mistrust towards the medical profession, and this has meant I have often not followed through with courses of treatment or medication.74

1 Female Private, Holsworthy Barracks, early 1990s, [Name redacted].
2 Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1960s, [Name redacted].
3 Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].
4 Female [Rank redacted], [On deployment], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
5 Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].
6 Male Recruit, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
7 Male Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted].
8 Male Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted].
9 Female Private, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
10 Male Recruit, [Locations redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].
11 Female Corporal, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
12 Female [Rank redacted], [On deployment], late 2000s, [Name redacted].
13 Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
14 Male Recruit, [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].
15 Male Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted].
16 Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].
17 Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
18 Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].
19 Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1960s, [Name redacted].
20 Male Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted].
21 Male Private, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].
22 Female Private, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Male Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Male Seaman, HMAS Melbourne, late 1960s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Male Able Seaman, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Male Recruit – Private, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Male Leading Aircraftman, [Location redacted], late 1980s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Male Private, Lavarack Barracks and [On deployment], late 2000s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Male Private, [On deployment] and Holsworthy Barracks, late 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Male Sergeant, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Male Recruit – Private, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Male Recruit – Corporal, [Locations redacted], early 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Male Seaman, [Locations redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Male Private – Corporal, [Locations redacted], 1990s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Male Sergeant, Gallipoli Barracks, late 1990s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Male Able Seaman, [Locations redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Male Seaman, [Locations redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Male Seaman, [Locations redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Male Recruit – Private, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Male Seaman, [Location redacted], early 1990s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Male Recruit – Private, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Male Recruit – Private, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Male Apprentice, Army Apprentice School, late 1960s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Male Recruit – Able Seaman, [Locations redacted], 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Male Seaman – Able Seaman, [Locations redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Female Recruit, [Location redacted], late 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Female Private – Corporal, [Locations redacted], early 1990s to late 1990s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Male Private, Gallipoli Barracks, early 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Male Recruit – Private, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Female Corporal, [Location redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Male Recruit, [Location redacted], late 1990s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Aircraftwoman, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Male Recruit – Private, [Locations redacted], early 2000s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Male Seaman, [Locations redacted], late 1960s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Male Staff Cadet, RMC, early 1950s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Male [Rank redacted], [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Male Recruit, [Location redacted], early 1980s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Male Apprentice, HMAS Nirimba, early 1970s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Male Recruit, ARTC Kapooka, late 1980s, [Name redacted].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A: Taskforce Terms of Reference

DEFENCE ABUSE RESPONSE TASKFORCE
APPOINTMENT OF TASKFORCE CHAIR
AND TASKFORCE TERMS OF REFERENCE

We hereby appoint the Honourable Len Roberts-Smith RFD, QC to lead the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce to operate in accordance with the following terms of reference as part of the Australian Government’s response to DLA Piper’s Report of the Review of allegations of sexual and other forms of abuse in the Australian Defence Force.

The Taskforce is to:

(i) assess the findings of the DLA Piper review and the material gathered by that review, and any additional material available to the Taskforce concerning complaints of sexual and other forms of abuse by Defence personnel alleged to have occurred prior to 11 April 2011, the date of the announcement of the DLA Piper Review;

(ii) include in this assessment the 24 Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) cases noted by DLA Piper and the cases of abuse identified by reports into physical violence and bullying at HMAS Leeuwin, and whether the alleged victims, perpetrators and witnesses in relation to these cases remain in Defence;

(iii) determine, in close consultation with those who have made complaints, appropriate actions in response to those complaints;

(iv) will also, as appropriate, gather additional information relevant to consideration of the handling of particular allegations eg relevant records held by Defence;

(v) take account of the rights and interests of alleged victims, accused persons and other parties;

(vi) liaise with the Minister for Defence, Chief of the Defence Force and the Secretary of the Department of Defence on any implications of its work for Defence’s ‘Pathway to Change’ and other responses to the series of reviews into Defence culture and practices in particular the work done by the Sex Discrimination Commissioner into the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and ADFA;

(vii) report to the Attorney-General and Minister for Defence every 3 months on its progress and issues arising, including whether the funding it has been provided is adequate so as to enable the Attorney-General and Minister for Defence to report to Parliament as appropriate;
(viii) report to the Attorney-General and Minister for Defence by October 2013 on whether, in what form, the Taskforce should continue in effect beyond the initial 12 month period and the funding that would be required so as to enable the Attorney-General and Minister for Defence to report to Parliament as appropriate; and

(ix) to advise whether a Royal Commission would be merited into any categories of allegation raised with the DLA Piper review or the Taskforce, in particular the 24 ADFA cases.

The terms and conditions of the engagement by the Commonwealth of the Honourable Len Roberts-Smith RFD, QC are to be governed by an agreement between the Honourable Len Roberts-Smith RFD, QC and Roger Wilkins AO, Secretary of the Attorney-General’s Department.
Appendix B: Plausibility fact sheet

FACT SHEET: PLAUSIBILITY

Plausibility

- Before the Taskforce can consider what outcomes might be available to individual complainants, the Taskforce must be satisfied that the person plausibly suffered abuse or had their allegation of abuse mismanaged by Defence.
- Under the Defence Abuse Reparation Scheme, before the independent Reparations Payments Assessor (Assessor) can make a decision that a Reparation Payment be made to a person, the Assessor must also be satisfied that the person plausibly suffered abuse and/or mismanagement.

What is meant by ‘Plausibility’

- To meet the threshold test of plausibility, the Taskforce and the Assessor must be satisfied that the abuse and/or mismanagement has an appearance of reasonableness.
- The Taskforce or Assessor are not required to be satisfied on the criminal burden of ‘beyond reasonable doubt’ that a person suffered abuse or mismanagement, nor are they required to be satisfied on the civil burden of the ‘balance of probabilities’ that a person suffered abuse or mismanagement.

How is ‘Plausibility’ assessed

- There is no one set of criteria that must be present in order for the Taskforce or Assessor to be satisfied that an allegation is plausible.
- The assessment of plausibility is based on all information available to the Taskforce, including information provided by the person in their Personal Account which must be verified in the form of a statutory declaration. The penalty for purposely making a false statutory declaration is imprisonment.
- The Taskforce and the Assessor might also consider, but are not limited to considering, the following when assessing plausibility:
  - medical records;
  - any material referred to in other Review reports and findings;
  - Defence employment and medical records;
  - DVA and/or Comcare records (where there has been a worker’s compensation claim);
  - a statement from a third party (for example, a witness, colleague or family member); and/or
  - similar allegations of abuse which have been brought to the attention of the Taskforce, which occurred in the same Defence institution.
Appendix C: Feedback from complainants

The Taskforce carefully considers all feedback received from complainants in order to further strengthen and develop its processes.

A brief selection of the feedback received from complainants is provided below. This feedback demonstrates the impact that the Taskforce is having on complainants’ lives.

All quotes have been de-identified and provided with the consent of the complainant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference number</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013/1430</td>
<td>‘Thanks [Case Coordinator] for giving me a starting point. I’ll pursue this matter as far as I’m able and regardless of the outcome I’ll feel much better knowing that at least I had a go at it. And thanks again for everything else. The treatment I’ve had from [the Taskforce] from the outset has restored a positive outlook that went missing from my life years ago.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/1140</td>
<td>‘Thanks to you and the [Taskforce] programme our lives have taken a turn for the better. I would like to congratulate you and the rest of the team for the efficient manner with which you have carried it out. With such a big programme as this it would be easy to lose sight of the human element. You certainly kept a caring approach to the job and I feel uplifted by the interest you have taken in any worry I have expressed. In particular, your encouragement kept me going when the submission opened some old painful wounds. Add the very welcome reparation to all the written and verbal comfort, I feel that closure on the events of 1954 has been satisfactorily achieved.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/2053</td>
<td>‘I just wish to place on record, that you, as my Case Officer, acted in a most caring, compassionate and professional manner and made this journey less stressful and as fluent as possible. I appreciated your patience in listening to some of my “ramblings” as to some of the abuse I endured whilst undergoing National Service, and your patience was aligned to your extremely caring/compassionate nature. Your professionalism is not only a credit to yourself, but for the organisation you represent. Once again, sincere thanks for your invaluable assistance. I will not be forgotten. If you so desire, please show this letter to your immediate supervisor/manager, so that he/she is aware of the quality of staff under their control.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/1444</td>
<td>‘I also appreciate your respect and kindness shown toward my wife and myself being treated as a person and client, we are fortunate to have you as our Case Coordinator.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2013/1183

"Dear Sir ... I would like to personally thank you, and a few others that I will name in how my application has been handled. ... For the work you have done and are doing not only with my application but the applications of all to the [Taskforce] I ... [Name] for truly going above and beyond the call of duty, often in his own time, after hours at night and weekends. I cannot praise this man highly enough. I do not know if there are awards in the APS but if there are [Name] should be on top of the list of nominations for them. I know that I am not alone in thinking this.

[Complainant Support Officer] for giving me a chance to talk openly without rebuttal and offering of helpful advice. She does a wonderful job and helped me enormously, probably without knowing through some of my hardest times. I cannot offer her enough thanks and please let her know this.

Lastly, my case co-ordinator, he too listened to me again in some of my hardest times without criticism. I believe he did his best for me also. I look forward to working with him in the near future with regards to my counselling and especially my restorative engagement. Again Sir, my many thanks. You may publish this letter on your web site if you desire."

### 2013/2329

"This process has allowed me to re-open and re-assess old unpleasant experiences that I had buried in the back of my mind. I still bear a degree of resentment and anger towards the main offenders, but they were very young themselves, and received no guidance or counselling in terms of appropriate behaviour towards others from the RAAF who were our guardians. I have internally shifted most of the blame to RAAF management at the time for lack of duty of care towards minors. I am personally very satisfied with where things are at present in respect of the reparation process, and also very pleased with how defence has adopted a no tolerance approach towards any form of abuse. Thank you [Case Coordinator] for your part in this process - particularly in keeping me informed."

### 2013/678

"To all [Taskforce] staff ... I want to say you have all been fantastic, caring understanding and one of the most professional groups of people I have ever had the pleasure of being associated with. It is a very difficult task that you are performing and a couple of things could be improved perhaps but overall I know with all my heart you are doing the very best you can and no one can reasonably ask for more than that.

... Because of the [Reparation Payment], I now know that my story is believed as it should be. And having that plausibility recognised means absolutely everything to me. It is also the exact amount of money for what it is designed to do. There is no amount of money that can compensate for the abuse I and many have suffered and I know you are not trying to compensate for that. You are simply saying sorry and adding an enormous weight to that sorry with a gift. You have no need to change anything at all, and just know that you have my 100% support and appreciation for everything that you are doing. I cannot reiterate enough how much you have improved my life, just keep up the good work, as I know you will."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference number</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013/1261</td>
<td>[The complainant] stated that he was shocked, that he had no idea how much, if any, that he would be getting. He reported that the thing that really excited him was the recognition, as well as for others not to have to go through what he went through, was the most important thing to him. He said he had gone outside to take my phone call and that he was very glad it was raining, as this meant no-one would see the tears that were running down his face as I gave him the news. He stated that he really appreciated what the Taskforce had done, the Minister and everyone working at the Taskforce and for me to thank everyone involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/1315</td>
<td>’I hope all is going well with the Taskforce and that other cases outcomes are as successful as I feel this has been for me. I am happy to keep you updated on my progress and I believe that without the Taskforce’s assistance I would not have been able to seek treatment or gain some organisational acknowledgement for what was done to me. For that I thank you.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/1285</td>
<td>’Thank you for the phone call yesterday and for forwarding the email. I read the email and am very grateful to [the Taskforce] and yourself for all your understanding on what was a very difficult time for myself in the Navy. I have moved on in many ways from what happened as I had to for my family and for my health with the help of my Doctors and Physiologists. Yet I feel with [The Taskforce’s] help I finally have the chance to close a chapter that I had deep down inside and the understanding that this should have never happened as it did. For this I am so grateful and wish to give thanks to everyone involved in my case and most of all to you for being so helpful and understanding on the phone. I look forward to my meeting in the future in the Restorative Engagement Program. I don’t feel I need to add anymore to my case, as I feel now finally after all these 16 years somebody does care and understand what happened was so wrong outside of my Family, Doctors and Physiologists. Thank you so much [Case Coordinator].’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/1417</td>
<td>‘Hello [Case Coordinator], my head is in a very good space at this time as you can imagine. I have been working with a Psychologist through [the Taskforce] and have found this process to be very helpful. The timing must have been near on perfect, at least I’m not thinking of suicide anymore. My really nasty dreams seem to have disappeared to a large degree also. In the work place I have a very supportive Supervisor now and my work group seems much happier now that one of our team is moving on. Family life also seems to be on the improve and I can see a way ahead on my projects now. I’m not all that sure I am going to need access to ”Restorative Engagement” as I originally thought I would. This whole process has most likely saved my life and I thank you for your assistance. I have a great support network around me now and they are keeping close tabs on me and to that end, I have only just returned from a coffee and chat session at the Sergeants mess where I had a meeting with my ‘Mentor’. Faithfully yours.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX C: FEEDBACK FROM COMPLAINANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference number</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2013/1417        | **Further correspondence from complainant:**  
| 2013/1417 (continued) | 'Dear Dart,  
| | Happy for you to use that material.  
| | There has been no change from my last report other than I have made contact with Vet Affairs and I now have a ‘white card’ to assist with costs for Anti Depressants. I still have trouble loosing [sic: losing] focus [getting confused] and I have to drag myself back to reality on a frequent basis. Not sure if this is an old person thing or the bad side of the Anti Depressant drug or failing mental health. Might discuss that with [Name] [my Corp Psych counsellor] this Friday, I have absolutely no interest in sex............. Anti depressants will do that apparently. Bad Dreams still happen on occasion but to a much lesser degree than before. I haven’t had to go and take a drive to see if there is a body where I left it in my dream. I also haven’t had to go and check my chainsaw for meaty bits for a while now. Make no mistake, If I ever saw the guy that caused this to happen to me............it could still get very ugly. I have been giving away a bunch of stuff lately which has raised concerns with those in the know but it has been for reasons other than thoughts of suicide. My work mates are very supportive and can tell when I’m getting confused and make allowances for that. I have five years to run until I retire at 60 I hope I last that long. Best regards.......and yes you can use that material as well if you want to.  
| | [Complainant’s Name].’  
| 2013/1456 | ‘Thank you again for your level of communication and support during this process. It was difficult for me to submit this application in the first instance but through your reassurance and careful explanations the process has been made as easy as possible and I thank you for that.’  
| 2013/0338 | ‘I am stoked to hear this. This acknowledges that it was bad, that it wasn’t just me saying it was bad. All that has happened recently means I will definitely take a new road. The counsellor has been great, particularly in helping with my PSTD and giving me tools to deal with this. Anzac Day has just passed and it was hard, to have lost my career, still breaks my heart. No amount of money can bring back my career, but it will help me. Thanks for all the support and kindness.’  
| 2013/1956 | ‘Words are not adequate for any attempt to explain my gratitude -- and admiration for your kindness and generosity of spirit. I have been in a very bad place lately; a nightmare world of terror, loneliness, paranoia and isolation. It’s a terrible place to be when you have three other people depending on you... And [Case Coordinator], throughout all of this you have been there like a kind and guiding light. I hope your family, your friends and your work colleagues at all levels are aware of the unique person in their lives.’  
| 2013/0413 | ‘[The complainant] noted that the payment and counselling have helped him in many ways and that he plans on buying a computer and doing a computer course, something he would not have considered possible prior to Reparation Payment and counselling.’
Appendix D: Locations and establishments

The following comprises a list of locations and establishments where 10 or more plausible cases of abuse occurred. This list is based on cases that were assessed by the Taskforce as raising plausible allegations of abuse as at 30 October 2014. One case generally relates to abuse experienced at one location (occasionally abuse experienced over a number of locations may be classes as one case of abuse if it is part of an ongoing campaign of abuse). Complainants may have experienced more than one case of abuse during their time in Defence. Please note the work of the Taskforce is still ongoing and these numbers are subject to change once all complaints have been assessed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Leeuwin – Fremantle WA</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Recruit Training Centre, Blamey Barracks, Kapooka – Wagga Wagga NSW</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Cerberus – Crib Point VIC</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Apprentice School, Balcombe Barracks and Latchford Barracks – VIC</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavarack Barracks – Townsville QLD</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF Base Wagga – Wagga Wagga NSW</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puckapunyal Military Area – Puckapunyal VIC</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Nirimba – Quakers Hill NSW</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallipoli Barracks (Enoggera) – Brisbane QLD</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holsworthy Barracks – Sydney NSW</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) – Canberra ACT</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF Base Edinburgh – Edinburgh SA</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Military College – Duntroon [RMC] – Canberra ACT</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF Base Amberley – Amberley QLD</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF Base Williamtown – Williamtown NSW</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF Base Laverton [RAAF Base Williams] – Laverton VIC</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Kuttabul – Sydney NSW</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Creswell – Jervis Bay ACT</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singleton Training Area – Hunter Valley NSW</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Offices, Campbell Park Offices and Brindabella Park Offices – Canberra ACT</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Albatross – Nowra NSW</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Melbourne II (28 October 1955 – 30 June 1982)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Sydney III (16 October 1948 – 12 November 1973)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Watson – Sydney NSW</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Stirling – Garden Island WA</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robertson Barracks – Holtze NT</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF Base Point Cook [RAAF Base Williams] – Point Cook VIC</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Location Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On deployment – Timor-Leste (East Timor)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On deployment – Vietnam</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On deployment – Malaysia (includes 13 cases at RAAF Base Butterworth)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel Barracks [Moorebank] – Sydney NSW</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Penguin – Sydney NSW</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF Base Fairbairn – Canberra ACT</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Force Correctional Establishment, Holsworthy – Sydney NSW</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF Base East Sale – East Sale VIC</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Brisbane II (16 December 1967 – 19 October 2001)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Perth II (17 July 1965 – 15 October 1999)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Success II (23 April 1986 – present)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingleburn Army Camp – Sydney NSW</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF Base Townsville – Townsville QLD</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simpson Barracks [Watsonia Barracks] – Melbourne VIC</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Aviation Centre – Oakey QLD</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Penguin I (1 July 1913 – present)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Sydney IV (29 January 1983 – present)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Island Precinct – Sydney NSW</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randwick Barracks – Sydney NSW</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Adelaide II (15 November 1980 – 19 January 2008)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Hobart II (18 December 1965 – 12 May 2000)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Stuart II (28 June 1963 – 26 July 1991)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS Vampire II (23 June 1959 – 13 August 1986)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>