



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Defence**



**AUSTRALIAN  
DEFENCE FORCE**

## **Reform undertaken in response to issues raised during Case Study 40 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse**

**22 August 2017**

Defence is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all youth that come into contact with the organisation, be they Australian Defence Force (ADF) members, ADF Cadets or young people participating in work experience or other youth engagement programs.

Below is a summary of the significant reform work that Defence has undertaken to enhance youth safety policies and embed a zero tolerance approach to abuse across the organisation.

### *Working with Children Checks*

A key element of Defence's 'youth safe' practices is suitability screening, which includes state and territory 'Working with Children Checks' where appropriate.

Defence commenced Working with Children Checks in 2014, as an element of suitability screening for all adults in the ADF Cadets program. Defence has subsequently extended the requirement for suitability screening across other environments including:

- ADF programs in which Defence personnel (military and civilian) and contractors interact with ADF members under the age of 18.
- Defence Youth Engagement and recruitment programs in which Defence personnel and contractors interact with members of the community under the age of 18.

Suitability screening applies to all personnel (including contractors) whose principal responsibilities include working directly with or supervising young people, or having regular face-to-face contact or supervising young people overnight.

### *'One Cadet' Reform Program*

The ADF Cadets program is a personal development program for young people, supported by the ADF in cooperation with the Australian community.

Support and supervision of the 26,000 ADF Cadets is delivered by more than 3,200 officers, instructors and 'approved helpers', all of whom are volunteers, across 508 ADF Cadets units located in all states and territories.

The 'One Cadet' reform program began in 2016 to standardise the common elements of the three ADF Cadet programs and streamline accountability and lines of responsibility across the ADF Cadets.

On 1 February 2017 the ADF Cadets Headquarters was established with the appointment of the Commander ADF Cadets/Head Reserve and Youth Division as a single point of accountability for youth safety to the Vice Chief of the Defence Force. The ADF Cadets Headquarters is responsible for implementing and managing the reform program, with a particular emphasis on governance and enhancement of the program's youth safety regime.

### *Defence Youth Safety Framework*

The Defence Youth Safety Framework, launched in December 2015, comprises seven core components and several elements, including policies. The Framework is being developed and implemented over three years, in partnership with Ernst and Young and Bravehearts; this activity is occurring in conjunction with significant reform activity in the ADF Cadets Program. This development work is scheduled for completion by September 2017.

The Defence Youth Safety Framework incorporates a number of components that, together, will ensure a safe environment for young people participating in ADF Cadets, recruit schools, work experience programs, and other youth engagement programs. It is ensuring a youth safety culture is properly embedded and supported by robust governance arrangements, procedures, policies, guides and fact sheets.

In addition, Defence is collaborating with other Federal government departments and agencies to develop and implement a common risk-based child safety framework. The Department of Social Services has the lead on this activity, which has an objective of enhancing the protection of children in Commonwealth care from institutional abuse.

### *Defence Youth Safety Policies*

The foundation suite of Defence's 'child safe' or youth safety policies was published in June 2016. Additional policies were published in April and June 2017 as part of the ongoing development of the Youth Safety Framework. Tranches of new youth safety policies are scheduled to be published in September 2017. The new policies are supported by associated suites of 'enabling resources' including procedures, protocols, guides and fact sheets.

### *Communication*

Significant efforts have been made to communicate information broadly to the Defence organisation and specifically to individual ADF Cadet organisations regarding the age of consent, 'special care' provisions and a direction that no cadet under the age of 18 (or other minor) is to receive blame for an intimate relationship with an adult. The Defence Youth website has been identified as a primary source of information and subsequently is being redesigned to enable more intuitive functionality.

### *Training*

Three of five focussed Youth Safety training packages have been developed and made available on the Defence e-Learning platform CAMPUS and for ADF Cadets on CadetNet. The remaining two training packages will be delivered by 30 September 2017.

## *Safety Assurance*

A Defence Youth Safety Assurance Program and Toolkit has developed and was successfully piloted in March 2017. The Program and Toolkit set out prescribed Standards for culture, people and environmental practices, systems and processes, as well as a model to assess Defence's achievement against the Standards.

## *Reporting*

Services provided by the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office (SeMPRO) have been expanded to include support to Cadets, Officers and Instructors of Cadets, registered volunteers and their families who have been impacted by sexual misconduct during their ADF Cadets experience.

## *Legislation*

The *Defence Act 1903* (Cth) has been amended to clarify membership of ADF Cadets.

## *Governance*

The Defence Youth Safety Advisory Board, chaired by VCDF, met for the first time in May 2017. The Joint Cadet Executive Board, chaired by Commander ADF Cadets, has met twice in 2017 and is coordinating implementation of the 'One Cadet' reform program.

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## **Further information:**

ADF Cadets, Officers and Instructors of Cadets, registered volunteers and their families or others affected by sexual misconduct can contact SeMPRO for confidential advice and guidance.

Phone: 1800 SeMPRO (736 776) / outside Australia +612 6127 1759

Email: [sempro@defence.gov.au](mailto:sempro@defence.gov.au)

Web: [www.defence.gov.au](http://www.defence.gov.au)

ADF Cadets and other young people participating in Defence youth engagement programs may also report incidents of abuse to the Defence Force Ombudsman. The Defence Force Ombudsman is an independent organisation that investigates complaints about administrative and employment related matters that have not been resolved by Defence or other agencies.

Phone: 1300 395 776

Web: <http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/about/australian-defence-force/reporting-abuse-in-defence>

The Defence All-hours Support Line (ASL) is a confidential telephone service for ADF members and their families that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Phone: 1800 628 036

Crisis support and confidential counselling is also available by calling the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS).

Phone: 1800 011 046