

YOUTH POLICY MANUAL

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Defence engages with youth in support of Whole-of-Government youth policy, as articulated in the [Defence Youth Engagement and Development Policy Statement](#). In the Defence Youth context, the terms child, young person, youth and minor are equivalent and interchangeable.
- 1.2 Engagement with young people involves important associated responsibilities for their supervision, safety, care and protection.
- 1.3 The *Youth Policy Manual* ([YOUTHPOLMAN](#)) provides a single coordinated and cohesive reference for all Defence personnel who have responsibilities in connection with or are involved in Defence youth engagement programs, including Australian Defence Force Cadets (ADF Cadets).

POLICY INTENT

- 1.4 Defence recognises that the participation of young people in Australian society is an essential element of nation building and that the development of young people is crucial to the nation's future economic and social prosperity. It is in the interests of Defence that young people develop an interest in Defence, both to attract the right people, with the right skills, behaviours and attitudes to secure Australia and its interests into the future, and to cultivate a socially responsible attitude to Defence.
- 1.5 Defence conducts youth engagement and development activities which:
- a. assist young people to meet and address the complex challenges associated with their wellbeing, education, employment and participation in an increasingly connected world;
 - b. contribute to national endeavours and achievements in the field of youth development and nation building;
 - c. promote understanding of, and interest in, the role of Defence;
 - d. promote Defence-related employment pathways; and
 - e. support Defence members and their families.

YOUTH POLICY PRINCIPLES

- 1.6 In establishing and delivering youth activities, Defence must adhere to the following core principles:
- a. **Safety and wellbeing.** The safety and wellbeing of all young people involved in a Defence activity is paramount.
 - b. **Coordinated, coherent and well-governed.** All Defence youth activities must be delivered in a coordinated, coherent and well governed manner to maximise outcomes for both participants and Defence and ensure the effective use of resources.
 - c. **Human Rights.** Defence youth activities must comply with Australia's human rights treaty obligations, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

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- d. **Inclusivity.** Defence youth activities must engender the principles of inclusiveness of all young people, regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or ability.
- e. **Rewarding and enriching.** All Defence youth activities must align with good practice youth development principles such as those articulated in the [Generic Youth Development Framework](#).

1.7 **The Defence Youth Safety Framework (DYSF)** contains policies that set out the Defence commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of young people under the age of 18. The framework focuses on the development of a Defence youth safety culture centred on addressing each of the risk factors associated with child abuse and neglect taking into account Defence training and operational requirements.

1.8 **YOUTHPOLMAN Part One - Whole-of Defence Youth Policies:** Contains policies that are applicable Defence wide and provide governance direction relating to the conduct of Defence youth programs in relation to youth safety.

1.9 **YOUTHPOMAN Part Two - ADF Cadets:** Contains all ADF Cadets common tri-Service policy. The policies provide leading practice evidence-based direction on the day to day management of the ADF Cadets enterprise. These policies supersede all relevant extant single cadet organisation policies on the matters to which it relates. In the event of any inconsistency policies contained in part 2 prevail over single cadet organisation policies.

ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER

1.10 The YOUTHPOLMAN is issued with the authority of the Secretary and Chief of the Defence Force (CDF). The Chief of Joint Capabilities (CJC) is authorised to issue subsequent chapters of the YOUTHPOLMAN.

THE CHIEF OF JOINT CAPABILITIES is the Accountable Officer and primary sponsor for youth safety in Defence and has overall responsibility for developing and monitoring overarching, consistent and effective whole of Defence youth safety policies and practices.

1.11 CJC authorises Head Reserve and Youth Division (HRYD)/Commander ADFC to manage, maintain and report on compliance with the policies contained in YOUTHPOLMAN and the DYSF.

HEAD RESERVE AND YOUTH DIVISION (HRYD) is also the Commander ADF Cadets (ADFC) and is accountable to the CJC for the development, implementation and governance of the enterprise child safety system (including ADF Cadets), and other common elements of the ADFC program(policies, procedures, training, assurance and enabling functions).

1.12 CADFC is the Responsible Officer for youth safety in Defence and is responsible for:

- a. supporting the CJC in the discharge of youth safety responsibilities
- b. developing and maintaining the DYSF
- c. monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the DYSF
- d. facilitating and coordinating consistent approaches to youth safety across Defence
- e. providing youth safety advice and support to implementation.

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GROUP HEADS AND SERVICE CHIEFS

1.13 The Group Heads and Service Chiefs are responsible for the implementation of the policy contained in the YOUTHPOLMAN in their respective Services and the cadet organisations that they administer including:

- a. implementation of the relevant policies contained in the YOUTHPOLMAN within their respective ADF Cadets programs;
- b. the development, maintenance, accuracy and currency of service-specific information outlined in YOUTHPOLMAN; and
- c. the development, maintenance, accuracy and currency of service-specific procedures.

1.14 Commanders, supervisors and managers must give appropriate priority, encouragement and support to the interests of youth who engage with Defence.

IMPLEMENTATION

1.15 All Groups and Services responsible for the management of Defence youth programs including ADF Cadets must ensure that appropriate arrangements and adequate resourcing are in place to enable the policies outlined in the YOUTHPOLMAN to be implemented.

1.16 Any resources required to meet CJC or Service Chief's intent are to be bid for through the respective chain of command.

1.17 All ADF Cadets extant and future guidance, procedural documentation and action must be consistent with YOUTHPOLMAN.

Accountable Officer: Chief of Joint Capabilities

Policy Officer: Head Reserve and Youth Division/Commander ADF Cadets