

# Appendix E

## Chapter 2: Chief of Defence Force Action Plan for the Recruitment and Retention of Women: How effective was it?

### Appendix E.1 – Snapshot of initiatives and updates

Theme	Initiative	Status as at April 2011	Status as at Nov 2011	Mapping the Action Plan to the Review Report and Recommendations
Increase enlistment of women	1. Continue implementation of Recruitment of Women Strategy.	On track	On track	<p>While the Review suggests there should be continued monitoring and evaluation of Recruitment of Women Strategy (ROWS) initiatives to ascertain whether they are increasing attraction/ conversion of women through the recruiting pipeline, the Review also finds that the ROWS will not be enough <i>on its own</i> to increase the representation of women across the ADF. Targeted interventions are needed to enhance recruitment and broaden occupational opportunities available to women. (Recommendations 8-10).</p> <p>The Report also makes recommendations to increase the attraction of women at different stages, including entering the ADF mid-career. (Recommendation 8)</p>
	2. Investigate and develop a plan to expel barriers to enlistment.	Complete ('Attracting Women to the ADF' Research Project)	Monitor	
	3. Investigation of low female conversion rates (conversion from initial enquiry to enlistment)	On track	On track	
	4. Communicate benefits of women in the ADF, highlighting work-life balance.	Complete (Promotion in all recruitment material of Women in the ADF)	Monitor	
	5. Examine employment opportunities for mid-career entry points.	Complete	On track	
Develop mentoring and networking frameworks	6. Develop a range of mentoring, coaching, networking and shadowing programs.	On track	On track	<p>The Review makes recommendations to integrate and rationalise available programs and facilitate access to appropriate mentorship, networking and sponsorship opportunities. (Recommendation 12)</p> <p>These should be based on best practice principles.</p>
	7. Investigate the use of social networking technology.	Complete	Monitor	
	8. Develop a funded Young Female Leaders Network.	Complete	Investigate further	
	9. Develop a 'Women in Defence' intranet site.	Complete	Monitor	

Theme	Initiative	Status as at April 2011	Status as at Nov 2011	Mapping the Action Plan to the Review Report and Recommendations
Provide a workplace that accommodates career flexibility and difference	10. Education program on gender diversity and leadership for key senior and middle managers.	On track	On track	<p>The Review recommends the establishment of a new Flexible Work Directorate, which will be responsible (among other roles) for education on management of flexible work arrangements. (Recommendation 14)</p> <p>More broadly, Recommendations 1-4 (flowing from Principle 1 that strong leadership is necessary to drive reform) are designed to secure strong and unequivocal commitment to gender diversity from Defence leadership as well as from middle management.</p>
	11. All new personnel policy development is to be run against a 'filter' to ensure that access to flexible working arrangements is not compromised.	On track	On track	<p>The Review makes a range of recommendations to address systemic and cultural impediments to accessing flexible working arrangements. (Recommendations 14 and 15)</p> <p>The Review has also been advised that the Values, Behaviour and Resolution Branch (formerly Fairness and Resolution Branch) informally considers every new piece of policy from a gender and general diversity perspective, as part of the new formal process by which all Defence Instructions are developed and periodically reviewed. There is no similar oversight process for application of these policies within the single Services.</p>
	12. Policies relating to pregnancy / maternity leave and promotion need review including the categorisation of pregnant women as MEC 3.	Complete (Pregnancy specific medical category – MEC (303))	Monitor	<p>The Review makes a number of recommendations to facilitate flexible working arrangements and allow for more flexibility in career progression. (Recommendations 7, 14, 15)</p> <p>In addition, the Review suggests that policies on workplace restrictions during pregnancy should be based on contemporary research and best practice.</p>

Theme	Initiative	Status as at April 2011	Status as at Nov 2011	Mapping the Action Plan to the Review Report and Recommendations
	13. Develop, implement and communicate broadly a plan that supports personnel taking career breaks related to professional and personnel reasons.	On track	On track	<p>The Review's recommendations under Principle 4 recognise the importance of retention through facilitating greater career flexibility and use of work and family policies.</p> <p>Recommendation 7 proposes a number of measures to be put in place to build flexibility into the career model, time in rank provisions, timing of and access to 'career gates' and career pathways to enable more flexibility in career progression.</p> <p>Recommendation 8 emphasises the importance of facilitating the re-entry of personnel from the Reserve. The Review also recommends that COSC communicate its commitment to an ADF culture that is supportive of women's participation and a specific identified framework that will underpin its goals. (Recommendation 2)</p>
	14. Develop, implement and communicate a process for maintaining regular contact with personnel who are on a career break.	On track	On track	<p>The Review recommends the development of mechanisms to allow people on leave to access training and career gate courses online, and to register for particular tasks/projects, if they wish to do so. (Recommendation 7)</p> <p>It is noted that Plan SUAKIN recommended implementation of an e-portal in order to provide Reservists and the wider Reserve community with a web-based interface to stay connected with the Defence community.</p>
	15. The policy of 'one person against one position' be amended.	Complete	On track	<p>The Review recommends the introduction of a workforce management system that enables more than one member to be posted/assigned to the same position. (Recommendation 15)</p>

Theme	Initiative	Status as at April 2011	Status as at Nov 2011	Mapping the Action Plan to the Review Report and Recommendations
	16. Provide ADF members with the same entitlement as is available under the DeCA with respect to the ability to purchase additional annual leave.	Of concern	Of concern	This is not within the Review's terms of reference.
	17. Provide ADF members with the same entitlement as is available under the DeCA with respect to the right to be able to work part-time hours after maternity or adoption leave.	On track	On track	This is accommodated under the ADF's new Flexible Working Arrangements policy (for up to two years). As such, it is not addressed in the Review's recommendations.
	18. Investigate provision of broader access to various child care arrangements.	On track	On track	<p>The Review recommends the development of 'Support to Postings' plans by career management agencies and personnel as part of career planning and/or when postings decisions are made. This will address issues such as child care and other supports. (Recommendation 17)</p> <p>The Review also suggests that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is a need for Defence to consider the provision of more flexible child care options for ADF members</li> <li>• Defence should examine the operation and accessibility of its child care services, including in remote and regional locations, to ensure that they effectively meet the needs of ADF personnel</li> <li>• the point system in the Defence child care Priority of Access Guidelines should be reviewed to ensure that it appropriately reflects the needs of ADF families.</li> </ul>

Theme	Initiative	Status as at April 2011	Status as at Nov 2011	Mapping the Action Plan to the Review Report and Recommendations
Reform career management philosophy and practice	19. The <i>Strategic Career Management Framework</i> should be implemented in accordance with the COSC outcomes of September 2007.	On track	On track	The Recommendations under Principle 2 recognise that the current rigid, linear, one-size-fits-all career continuum does not allow for talent to be managed in a flexible way, and seek to improve the pathways for increasing the representation of women in senior ranks. (Recommendations 5-7) Recommendation 17 also provides career management with mechanisms for working with personnel to support career/work flexibility.
Make commanders accountable for retention	20. Develop a process to evaluate Unit command and Career Management Agency effectiveness in retention of their personnel.	On track	On track	The Review's Recommendations under Principle 1 include the development of a performance framework to ensure accountability for retention of personnel and high performing and inclusive defence environments. (Recommendations 2 and 4)
	30. (previously 20A). Ensure that Performance Appraisal reporting includes a specific assessment of how commanders contribute to the retention of their personnel.	Complete	On track	
	21. Develop a behavioural compact articulating the attitudes and behaviours expected of all members of the ADF in their interactions with women in the services, their families, the community and on deployment.	Complete	Complete	
	22. Consider benefits of joint program with AFL/ NRL on respect and responsibility.	Complete	Investigate further	This is a matter for the ADF's consideration.
	23. Develop lead and lag indicators to measure the impact of the Action Plan	On track	On track	As the Review Report suggests that the implementation of the Action Plan should be discontinued in its current form, the development of lead and lag indicators to measure the impact of the Action Plan is not applicable to the Review's recommendations.

Theme	Initiative	Status as at April 2011	Status as at Nov 2011	Mapping the Action Plan to the Review Report and Recommendations
	25. Develop a process to capture the number of applications and approvals of flexible working arrangements and link this to the HRMeS.	On track	On track	The Review recommends that the responsibilities of the proposed Flexible Work Directorate include the collection of tri-Service data on applications for flexible working arrangements. (Recommendation 14)
Communicate organisational attributes and the suite of (newly) available working conditions	24. Develop an education and communication package and policy guide to inform ADF members on the flexibility provided by the existing ADF work-life balance policy.	On track	On track	The Review has made it clear in Principle 1 that strong statements and examples set by leadership are vital to the success of increasing gender diversity, and the recommendations which follow are aimed at communicating and promoting a broad organisational understanding of the business case for women in the ADF as a core operational imperative. (Recommendations 2-4)  As noted above in relation to CDF Action Plan recommendation 10, the Review recommends that the role of the new Flexible Work Directorate include education on management of flexible work arrangements. (Recommendation 14)
	26. Communicate examples of personnel who have undertaken non-traditional career paths and succeeded.	On track	On track	
	27. Provide presentations at Service pre-command courses on "effective management of men and women in the ADF" and "flexible workplace options in the ADF".	On track	On track	
	28. MINDPMS to launch the CDF Action Plan	Complete	Complete	
	29. Develop a strategic communications plan for internal and external audiences linked to Force 2030 foundation elements and articulating what success will achieve and why this is important	Complete	Monitor	

## Appendix E.2 – Progress on CDF Action Plan for the Recruitment and Retention of Women Initiatives

### **Increase enlistment of women into the ADF**

The starting point of the CDF Action Plan ('Action Plan') is that in order to retain women the ADF must first attract them. In a competitive labour market, this means positioning the ADF as an employer of choice.

With this aim, the first five initiatives focus on increasing the enlistment of women into the ADF, largely through implementation of the *Recruitment of Women Strategy* (RoWS). The RoWS, discussed in section 4.2, predates the Action Plan and was developed in 2007. It did not receive dedicated funding until the 2009 Defence White Paper.<sup>15</sup>

Supporting these initiatives, the Action Plan focuses on investigation of reasons for women not joining the ADF and for the development and funding of a plan to address these barriers. It also calls for investigation into the reasons for the significantly lower conversion rates of women through the recruiting process than men (for example, in 2009 the conversion rate from enquiry to enlistment was 20:1 for women, compared to 11:1 for men).<sup>16</sup>

The RoWS was developed from research examining the attraction of women to the ADF, and was directed towards increasing the appeal of ADF careers to women and countering stereotypical views which turn prospective candidates away. In the April 2011 progress update, it was reported that each Service was in the process of ongoing implementation of the RoWS, led by Defence Force Recruiting, and that strategies were put in place to address barriers to enlistment identified in the research.

The progress updates also report that Defence Force Recruiting's investigations showed two main factors impacting on the low conversion rates of women candidates: that women were second-guessing their decision to join based on lack of insight into realities of career in ADF, and poor physical fitness.<sup>17</sup> For example, Army reported in April 2011 that the Physical Fitness Test failure rate for female Army candidates was 30.34% (compared to 3.26% for males).<sup>18</sup> Measures developed to address this included a Women's Mentoring Program (to enable communication between candidates and serving members) and a candidate fitness program.<sup>19</sup> As section 4.2 examines, however, this somewhat oversimplifies the issue – there are a range of other complex reasons for the higher rates of attrition of women through the recruiting process.

The Action Plan also called for the development of promotional material highlighting jobs that women do in the ADF and how a career in the ADF makes a difference and allows an appropriate work-life balance. In April 2011, it was reported that this was complete and 'women are now incorporated into all media DFR makes use of to promote Defence.'

The Action Plan also contained one further significant enlistment related initiative requiring that opportunities for mid-career entry points for men and women be examined. This had earlier been reported as 'completed' because the *Defence (Personnel) Regulations 2002* and existing personnel policies were viewed as providing a comprehensive framework allowing for mid-career entry of personnel. However, in November 2011, the Working Group reported that this policy framework had not been accompanied by cultural change and that mid-career entry was only used in limited categories for specialist officers or lateral entry.

On revisiting each of the initiatives related to enlistment of women at the November 2011 meeting of the Working Group, the position was that none of them had yet been completed. No further detailed update was provided as DFR were unable to attend the meeting. As section 4.2 discusses, the Review has found that there is still a gap between the conversion rates of women and men, from enquiry to enlistment, within the 'recruiting pipeline'.

### **Develop mentoring and networking frameworks**

These initiatives focused on the development of mentoring and networking frameworks to improve opportunities for women to reach higher ranks and provide role models for women progressing through the system. This included development of mentoring, coaching, networking and shadowing programs.

The Action Plan required the ADF to make these types of programs available throughout a person's career, so that they take into account and emphasise, the value of people with different needs, rather than focusing only on women. The initiatives encompass non-traditional models for these types of programs, utilising social networking technologies, and requiring the creation of a Women in Defence website and a 'Young Female Leaders Network'.

Although in April 2011 progress against these tasks was reported as 'good', in November 2011, the position was that none of these tasks have been completed. As section 5.4 discusses in more detail, the Services have a number of programs in place, however, these are inconsistent in their implementation and how they are accessed.

### **Provide a workplace that accommodates career flexibility and difference**

The Action Plan contains nine separate initiatives around accommodating workplace flexibility and difference. The initiatives are directed towards ensuring career flexibility and a culture that supports career breaks and flexible work options to cater for personnel at different 'ages and stages'. Overall, the aim is to create a culture which recognises that a 'one size fits all' linear career model is no longer appropriate for the ADF.<sup>20</sup>

One initiative relates to the development of an education program on gender diversity and leadership, aimed at key senior and middle managers (particularly for personnel in key leadership appointments and career management), to assist them to better understand the need for, and champion, the positive benefits of a more gender balanced workforce that is supportive for women.

Defence has rolled out a pilot gender leadership training/education package, 'Leading a Gender Diverse Workforce', provided to Service training organisations for each Service to tailor to suit its requirements. This package is intended to be a key development to support this Action Plan initiative.<sup>21</sup>

The Services also have their own broad strategies underway: Army is implementing Flexible Career Pathways and has released the Chief of Army's 'Work-Life Balance Intent', Navy participates in a Women's Leadership Program and has created the role of 'Navy Women's Strategic Adviser'<sup>22</sup> whose role is to 'ensure that all people issues are considered against the gender filter to ensure any decisions do not adversely impact on women'<sup>23</sup> Air Force has implemented a Gender Diversity Strategy and created the Directorate of Workforce Flexibility and Diversity as 'an avenue of support and advice to commanders/managers to assist facilitation of flexible work arrangements'.<sup>24</sup>

In April 2011, it was reported that good progress has been made against these initiatives, noting that some require policy changes and have implications for workforce structure that would take several years to fully implement. When the Working Group revisited these action items in November 2011, however, it was noted that none of these tasks had been completed.<sup>25</sup>

Several of these initiatives mandated changes to ADF policies to ensure they do not operate in a way that discourages the development of a culture that recognises flexibility in a person's work or career, for example:

- amending the 'one person against one position' policy to allow job-sharing
- running personnel policy against a 'filter' to ensure access to flexible working arrangements are not limited
- ensuring policies do not discriminate against pregnant women or those on maternity leave (e.g., medical downgrading related to pregnancy and the extent to which this acts as a barrier promotion or other employment opportunities)
- ensuring women can seek part-time work arrangements following return from maternity leave



- allowing for more flexibility than rigid and linear career path structures currently permit for people to take career breaks and the like (e.g., inflexible requirements for time in rank before promotion points can be passed)
- allowing for purchasing of additional leave.

The newly revised Defence Instruction on Flexible Working Arrangements is intended to accommodate job-sharing and part-time work. For example, the flexible work policy permits job-sharing and allows women returning from maternity leave to apply to work part time for up to two years. At the November 2011 meeting, the Working Group noted the importance of developing a communication strategy to ensure people are aware of the policy and combat perceptions that it is unreasonable to implement practices allowing for a greater balance between work and family.

The Working Group also found there was a need for further review to identify policies that may discriminate or that may limit access to flexible working options. Revisions to the Medical Employment Classification structure have made some improvements in relation to pregnant women/those on maternity leave, and physical fitness policies have been amended to better meet the needs of women returning to work from maternity leave. Air Force also flagged policy shifts so that those on part-time leave without pay no longer have seniority adjusted pro-rata (and so are not discriminated against when presented to promotion boards or other employment opportunities).

The Working Group also noted that there is a form of informal review by the Values, Behaviour and Resolution Branch (formerly Fairness and Resolution Branch) as part of the 'System of Defence Instructions process' (i.e., the formal process by which all Defence Instructions are developed and periodically reviewed).<sup>26</sup> The Working Group noted, however, there was 'no accompanying process in place for single service requirements'.<sup>27</sup>

The Working Group agreed that further review should include analysis of data to identify if there is evidence to show that there are links between policies and promotion rates of women.

The Action Plan also calls for processes to be established to maintain communication with personnel on career breaks. As at November 2011, it was reported that no formal policy has been developed around this. Although the Services had some mechanisms in place this was sometimes inconsistent and not monitored.<sup>28</sup>

There is one Action Plan initiative in the area of workplace flexibility listed as 'of concern': the recommendation that ADF members have the same entitlement as Defence APS employees to purchase additional leave (of up to four weeks).<sup>29</sup> This initiative was developed because of the view that many ADF parents had difficulties with insufficient leave to cover periods such as school holiday care under.

In November, it was reported that Defence was unable to implement this due to the systems used to administer ADF leave and pay.<sup>30</sup> The Working Group noted that this action item was to be put on hold until 2012 – 2015, when there would be a technical refresh of the systems and 'availability of funding to make whatever system changes were still necessary':

While Defence senior committees agreed with the concept they did not agree to introduction of the provision at this time due to system deficiencies which mean that unlike the APS system which is automated, an ADF system would be manual with an associated high administrative burden and a financial cost to Defence which could not be met at the time due to other, higher priorities.<sup>31</sup>

The final initiative under the theme of career flexibility requires investigation into provision of broader access to child care arrangements. This Action Plan initiative was previously reported as 'on track' and being handled by Defence Community Organisation (DCO). In an email to the Review on 24 January 2012, Defence advised that:

The review of childcare gaps and needs referred to in the action plan was conducted during 2009. The purpose of the review was to determine future strategies to meet the child care needs of Defence Families. This review was conducted for Defence by an external consultant and informed the Defence response to the post ABC Learning collapse period and the management of the Defence Child Care Program (DCCP) during this turbulent time. As a result, the DCCP maintained its stability and continued provision of services to Defence families despite great volatility in the sector. A further review will be conducted as part of routine business planning and preparation prior to June 2015.<sup>32</sup>

### **Reform of career management policy and practice**

The Action Plan contains one stand-alone initiative in relation to career management: implementation of the *Strategic Career Management Framework*. The objective behind this initiative is to reform career management to facilitate behaviour and cultural change, which is still lacking despite policies to enable career flexibility.

In particular, this focuses on selection, promotion and appraisal of career managers and education programs for them, to ensure that career managers recognise the value of personnel of different backgrounds, support alternate career paths and recognise their role in the retention of personnel. This initiative also focuses on transparency in promotion and command selection by setting clear criteria, to ensure that policies and processes for promotion do not disadvantage women.<sup>33</sup>

At the November 2011 Working Group meeting no update was provided. The status of this initiative remained as 'on track' with the following comment: 'Need to revisit'. Although the recommendations within the Framework had been agreed, funding was lacking until 2012-13. Each of the Services reported that processes were underway in relation to selection, training and coordination of career management.

### **Make commanders accountable for retention**

The Action Plan sets out several initiatives with a focus on measuring the contribution made by commanders and career managers to retention of personnel, particularly women, through their decisions and actions. The intention behind these initiatives is to provide for mechanisms to evaluate the retention climate within the ADF and measure the effectiveness of commanders and career managers through the human resources metrics systems, including through performance appraisal reporting, and processes such as capturing and recording information on applications/approvals for flexible working arrangements.<sup>34</sup>

Each Service has feedback/performance appraisal mechanisms in place. Performance appraisal reports (PARs) are expected to assess the member's performance over the reporting period, to identify individuals' strengths and weaknesses, provide feedback on performance and developmental needs, identify suitability for promotion courses and postings, and monitor performance levels.<sup>35</sup>

The Action Plan requires a specific assessment of how commanders contribute to the retention of their personnel to be included in performance appraisal reporting. However, despite the recent introduction of a new PAR system, the Working Group noted in November 2011 that 'even the new rating system does not presently hold commanders accountable and so does not address the intent of this initiative'. The Working Group also noted that due to the difficulty in capturing all flexible work arrangements being accessed identified and discussed, this initiative 'may be unable to be completed'.<sup>36</sup>

*Project LASER-Retention* (the Longitudinal ADF Study Evaluating Retention) is aimed at accurately modelling the retention of personnel undergoing initial training and in the first five years of service, to provide a better understanding of why members stay or leave. However, as the Working Group has observed, this project is not set up to evaluate the effectiveness of unit command and career management in the retention of their personnel.<sup>37</sup>

The Working Group concluded that there was a need to identify other methods that can be utilised to make commanders accountable for the retention of their personnel.

Under the broad theme of accountability, the Action Plan also calls for the development of a behavioural compact articulating expected attitudes and behaviours of ADF members. This is one of only two initiatives which are 'complete', as COSC agreed that the intent of this initiative was captured in existing mechanisms/codes of conduct/statement of values for each Service. A further initiative requiring consideration of Defence developing a joint program with the AFL and NRL (national football codes) on respect and responsibility has been 'held for further guidance'.<sup>38</sup>

In relation to one of the fundamental initiatives underpinning the Action Plan – the requirement to develop lead and lag indicators to measure the impact of the Plan itself – it was reported in April 2011 that some initial discussions had taken place about developing success measures and this was 'on track'. However,

the minutes of the November 2011 Working Group meeting note: 'Discussed the difficulty in developing lead indicators. Meeting to be arranged with workforce planning to progress this action item.' Defence subsequently advised the Review that, to date, no such indicators have been developed.<sup>39</sup>

### **Communicate organisational attributes and the suite of available working conditions**

The last major theme of the Action Plan is directed towards the need for proactive communication of the various initiatives and actions being undertaken within the ADF to improve recruitment and retention of women.

The Action Plan recommends initiatives around communicating success stories, (particularly examples of personnel who have undertaken non-traditional career paths or have made flexible working arrangements work) to reinforce the message that such career paths are viable and valued. The aim is to educate the ADF workforce, paving the way for behavioural change on available flexible work arrangements, and to clarify myths and misunderstandings. An important aspect is that senior leadership is united in communicating this message consistently.<sup>40</sup>

These communication initiatives overlap with implementation of other areas of the Action Plan, for example:

- creating awareness around family friendly policies and sending the message that a career in the ADF can allow women flexibility and the ability to maintain a suitable work-life balance
- developing the gender diversity leadership education package
- establishing communication processes around the release of new Flexible Working Arrangements policy.<sup>41</sup>

The Action Plan also requires a comprehensive communications strategy to be developed, linking success of the Plan to the Defence White Paper 2009. At the November 2011 meeting, however, it was reported that the only completed initiative within this thematic area was the launch of the Action Plan itself.

## **Appendix E.3 – Report on Women’s Participation in Navy (2009) on the CDF Women’s Action Plan,<sup>42</sup> Christine McLoughlin – Observations**

Observations of the McLoughlin report include:

- the importance of ensuring that senior leadership understands the business case for increasing the participation of women and the costs of failing to retain trained women, improving feedback loops within Defence in relation to policies which have changed and results flowing from the Action Plan
- the Action Plan does not address some fundamental systemic/cultural barriers, such as the absence of women in key leadership and decision-making forums (which are largely position and rank based), or the lack of flexibility in structuring the career continuum for particular roles
- the Action Plan does not address the inconsistency in the ADF’s people management capability and it should contain a component which focuses on accountability in relation to people management capabilities. Items that should be included are lag indicators like discharge requests, sick leave, Equity and Diversity incidents, flexible work arrangement requests and approvals. Lead indicators could include an ‘annual workforce engagement score’ to provide information about the culture in a unit
- the Action Plan does not do enough to address the cultural resistance within the ADF to any notion of preferential treatment for women. One suggestion in the McLoughlin report is to include early, visible and practical education to women from the outset of their careers on how they might be able to make family and career work. This may suggest the need for more radical initiatives, including positive discrimination to achieve a ‘critical mass’ of women across the board.

