

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS– FEBRUARY 2017

Finance and Public Administration Portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman

Outcome/Program:

Outcome 1. Fair and accountable administrative action by Australian Government entities and prescribed private sector organisations, by investigating complaints, reviewing administrative action and statutory compliance inspections and reporting.

Topic: Defence Force Ombudsman

Senator: Senator Skye Kakoschke-Moore

Question reference number: 123

Type of question: Written

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator SKYE KAKOSCHKE-MOORE:

Recent themes

Have there been any recent themes in complaints regarding Defence?

Answer:

One recent theme relates to the alleged misuse of social media by Australian Defence Force (ADF) members, with complaints coming from both members and civilians.

Another emerging theme is complaints about administrative issues relating to a person's service, which directly flow from alleged abuse suffered by the person in Defence. As an example, a person wishes to change their mode of discharge from administrative to medical, on the grounds that they had mental health issues as a result of the abuse they suffered while serving, and is unsatisfied with the Defence decision on that issue. Another example relates to how the Department of Veterans' Affairs assess a person's eligibility for benefits flowing from the person's abuse.

Question:

What are the most common issues, or complaints, people report?

Answer:

Between 1 July 2016 and 31 March 2017, the most common issues people report to the Defence Force Ombudsman are in relation to:

- the ADF's internal complaints mechanism, Redress of Grievance
- veterans' access to the disability pension
- career in the ADF
- discharge from the ADF
- service delivery in Defence agencies (including the Department of Veterans' Affairs)
- pay and conditions in the ADF
- health care and medical services, and
- disability compensation.