

## **Appendix 3**

### **Recommendations taken from the Commonwealth Ombudsman's report Australian Defence Force: Management of Complaints about Unacceptable Behaviour, June 2007**

#### **Recommendation 1**

Defence promote awareness of the Whistleblower scheme by including a cross reference to the scheme in the Instruction.

#### **Recommendation 2**

Defence review training for management of unacceptable behaviour complaints to maintain freshness and effectiveness. For example, Defence may consider changing and rotating case studies used for training courses, regularly developing and providing new case study exercises for distribution to units and equity advisers, and promoting awareness of different issues through articles in service newsletters and newspapers.

#### **Recommendation 3**

Defence consider strategies to ensure that all members have ready access to a skilled equity adviser, outside the chain of command if necessary. One strategy may be the use of external contractors.

#### **Recommendation 4**

Defence amend the Instruction to impose a time limit for ADF members dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation to seek review.

#### **Recommendation 5**

Defence consider increasing the availability of, or the ease of access to, independent mediators.

#### **Recommendation 6**

Defence ensure that training delivered to commanders, managers and equity advisers provides sufficient guidance about how to manage respondents fairly.

#### **Recommendation 7**

Defence clarify the action to be taken where commanders and managers identify a possible false or malicious complaint. This could include amending the Instruction to

detail the action to be taken by commanders and managers and addressing this issue in training.

### **Recommendation 8**

Defence consider implementing quality assurance mechanisms for recordkeeping and reporting to ensure that standards are being met.

### **Recommendation 9**

Defence amend the Instruction by requiring the initial report be submitted to Fairness and Resolution Branch within one week of receipt of the complaint.

### **Recommendation 10**

Defence consider amending the Instruction by adding a checklist with information about the role and responsibilities of each party to the complaint to help facilitate timely resolution.

### **Recommendation 11**

Defence consider ways to ensure that posting decisions take account of any limitations that have arisen as a consequence of the investigation of a complaint of unacceptable behaviour.

### **Recommendation 12**

Defence ensure that the reporting and record-keeping system for complaints of unacceptable behaviour is able to identify systemic issues and is readily accessible by those with a need to know.

### **Recommendation 13**

Defence consider options for quality assurance of the complaint-handling process, including the Fairness and Resolution Branch performing a feedback and quality assurance role.

### **Recommendation 14**

Defence reinforce that complaint resolution is a day-to-day management responsibility by including assessment of complaint management in annual performance appraisals for all commanders and managers and integrating training about managing and resolving complaints into general management/supervision training.

### **Recommendation 15**

Defence consider training modules that focus on effective communication skills for preventing and resolving complaints about unacceptable behaviour.