

## SENATE ESTIMATES BRIEF

### SMNCSO ELLIOTT COULSON

#### Key Facts

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- Defence sincerely regrets the distress caused to the family and friends of Ms Malonyay.
- 27 Nov 15 - CN posted an apology on *Navy Daily*.
- 5 Dec 15 - CN met with Mrs Wendy Malonyay.
- The Service funeral was provided to support the Coulson family.
- Defence is committed to the eradication of violence against women.

#### Key Issues

- 24 Apr 13 - SMN Elliott Coulson was found deceased adjacent to a Surfers Paradise hotel.
  - At the time of his death he was a person of interest in the death of Ms Kate Malonyay.
- Two media stories coincided with White Ribbon Day on 25 Nov 15. Both were related to domestic violence and the death of Ms Kate Malonyay.
  - 19 Nov 15 - media enquiry from *NewsCorp*.
  - 24 and 25 Nov 15 - ABC screened the *Hitting Home* documentary.
    - : *Hitting Home* generated further media articles and Navy received a great deal of criticism via social media.
    - : *Change.org* petition generated over 10,000 supporters.
- 27 Nov 15, you (CN) posted an apology on *Navy Daily*.
  - 30 Nov 15 the same apology was posted to Defence's *On the Record*.
- 30 Nov 15, you (CN) wrote a letter of apology to Mrs Wendy Malonyay, Kate's mother.
- 1 Dec 15 - ABC *Lateline* aired an interview with Mrs Wendy Malonyay.
- 5 Dec 15 you (CN) met with Mrs Wendy Malonyay.
- Navy's White Ribbon accreditation occurred in Jun 14.

## Background

- 20 Apr 13 - SMN Coulson reported as AWOL from HMAS *Darwin*.
- 20-22 Apr 13 – *Darwin* had intermittent telephone contact with SMN Coulson regarding his AWOL.
- 21 Apr 13 - the body of Ms Malonyay was discovered in her Mosman apartment.
- 24 Apr 13 - SMN Coulson was found deceased adjacent to a Surfers Paradise hotel. At the time of SMN Coulson's death he was a person of interest in the death of Ms Malonyay. Police were in attendance at the scene of SMN Coulson's death and there did not appear to be any suspicious circumstances.
- When requested by the family, Defence policy allows support for a funeral of a deceased Defence member.
  - PACMAN funeral support does not extend to members who are AWOL.
  - The DCO Bereavement Support Team (BST) during a meeting with SMN Coulson's family on 25 Apr 13 incorrectly informed the family of an entitlement to a Service funeral if requested. The family requested such a funeral.
  - Following this family request, approval was sought from DGDCO by Navy to provide support despite SMN Coulson being AWOL at the time of his death. This was approved 26 Apr 13.
  - 26 Apr 13 - Whilst agreeing to the Service funeral, initial direction provided was for minimum uniformed presence (3-4 people). On 30 Apr 13 the family articulated their desire to both the BST and the CO *Darwin* for a funeral with as much Navy input as possible. Based on this specific request for support by the family a decision was made to provide a 10 person uniformed official funeral party of eight coffin bearers, one OIC and one official mourner.
  - The *Defence Casualty and Bereavement Support Manual* has since been amended to reflect the PACMAN exclusion of service funerals to members who are AWOL.
- 3 May 13 - funeral for SMN Coulson was held on the Gold Coast. Regrettably, this coincided with the funeral for Ms Malonyay, which was not known to Navy at the time.
- PACMAN allows expenditure of up to \$12,500 on funeral costs. DCO expended \$8437.54 on SMN Coulson's funeral.
  - Policy also allows DCO to fund travel and associated costs for up to 12 people in the official funeral party. 10 members of the official funeral party were funded at a cost of \$4708.55 by DCO.
  - Total Defence funding expended for SMN Coulson's funeral was \$13,146.09.
- The Coulson family sent letters of appreciation to CN and the DCO Military Support Officer (MSO) thanking them for their support during their very difficult period.
- 29 Aug 14 - NSW Deputy State Coroner handed down his findings in the inquest into the death of Kate Malonyay.
  - The Coroner found that Ms Malonyay died between 17 and 19 Apr 13 in Mosman, as a result of injuries caused by asphyxiation and blunt force trauma to the head, inflicted by Elliott Coulson.
- Jun 14 Navy was accredited as a White Ribbon Workplace.
  - Navy was the first group within Defence to receive *White Ribbon* accreditation.

**Related briefs**

- QB15 – 000214 – *Death of Elliott Coulson*

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