

Independent review of

A successful and professional military force requires an effective military justice system – one which balances discipline of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) with the rights of individuals. For the past two years, Defence has been working to improve its military justice system and a review of the effectiveness of the changes is now underway. **Cristy Symington** explains.

The Independent Review of Military Justice Reforms will be led by former Chief Justice of the NSW Supreme Court, Sir Laurence Street, and retired Air Force Chief, Air Marshal Les Fisher. This follows the implementation of recommendations arising from the 2005 Senate Foreign Affairs and Trade References Committee report into 'The effectiveness of Australia's military justice system'.

Sir Laurence said he was glad to have the opportunity to contribute to the military justice review, particularly as the unique nature of warfare requires a purposeful system to ensure its members can operate safely and effectively.

"The women and men who serve with our ADF deserve a fair and just system to allow them to do their jobs as successfully as they can," he said.

"This review aims to find out how the changes are working and whether any further reforms are required. I'm looking forward to speaking to people about their experiences of the overhauled military justice system to gauge the performance following all of the changes prompted by the Senate Committee Report."

The review team will commence interviews in July. The team will be:

- checking the implementation status of all previously accepted inquiry/report recommendations;
- looking at the allocation and adequacy of resources;
- the structural suitability of the ADF's military justice organisations;
- identifying any systemic disciplinary and administrative irregularities regarding delivering military justice; and
- assessing the effectiveness of the system to deliver impartial, rigorous and fair outcomes.

The review team does not intend to hold any public hearings; however general submissions are invited with regard to the overall performance of the military justice system. The review aims to serve as a developmental signpost against which our military justice system can be assessed as part of an ongoing 'best-practice' program, and as a vehicle for Defence personnel to help shape future initiatives.

A robust military justice system is vital for discipline, morale and to complement the good work of ADF personnel serving overseas on operations or at home. The ADF aims to ensure that the military justice system not only supports operational effectiveness, but that it provides the best environment for military personnel and their individual rights.

For more information visit: <http://intranet.defence.gov.au/militaryjustice/changes.htm>, or contact Commander Rob Slaven on (02) 6243 6326



LEFT to RIGHT: Air Marshal Les Fisher (Ret'd), Sir Laurence Street, WONPC Gary Bromely, LTCOL Kath Sowry and WOFF Rob Stanwick.

Military Justice reform

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