

**Workplace Equity and Diversity
Annual Report**

2007-08

Introduction

Background

Under section 18 of the Public Service Act 1999, Agency Heads must establish workplace diversity programs. Defence complies with this requirement through the *Workplace Equity and Diversity Plan 2007-2009* (WEDP 2007-2009).

The Secretary of the Department of Defence and the Chief of the Defence Force have clearly stated their commitment to ensuring Defence workplaces are fair and inclusive, thereby enhancing operational capability and effectiveness.¹ They reiterated this commitment in a joint statement issued in May 2008. WEDP 2007-2009 was developed to provide practical and achievable actions to embed equity and diversity principles within Defence.

Purpose

This is the first report evaluating the implementation of the WEDP 2007-2009, summarising the achievements of the Groups and Services within Defence for the reporting period 1 July 2007 – 30 July 2008.

Good practice examples

To encourage learning and improvement, specific examples of good practice by individual Groups or Services have been highlighted throughout this report. Other actions reported are applicable to the whole of Defence.

This year Groups and Services were asked to highlight achievements in the areas of flexible workplace arrangements and strategies to attract, recruit and retain women, Indigenous Australians, people with disability and other minority groups.

¹ Workplace Equity and Diversity Plan 2007-2009, pg 1

Fairness and Resolution

Fairness and Resolution Branch (FR) assists Defence to achieve a working environment where diversity is valued and people treat each other fairly and with respect. The Branch comprises three directorates: Alternate Resolutions and Equity, Complaint Resolution and Rights and Responsibilities.

FR provides advice and support to personnel to resolve complaints at the lowest possible level through the chain of command, manages the formal complaints system when necessary, and has policy responsibilities for equity, diversity, privacy and the integrated complaint handling system.

FR also produces the WEDP for Defence to demonstrate its commitment to equity and diversity and to encourage these practices to be incorporated into day-to-day business. The WEDP creates an accountability framework ensuring measures taken to incorporate equity and diversity are in accordance with the corporate and business plans of the organisation, and satisfies Government policy and Commonwealth legislation. Services and Groups are required to report on their performance annually.

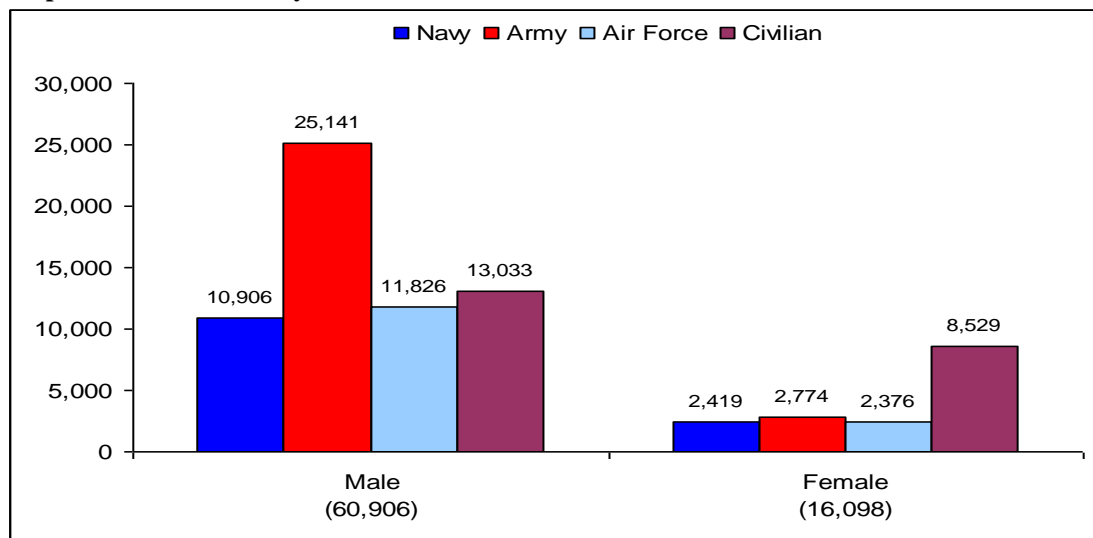
The WEDP 2007-2009 focuses on the themes of diversity, work/life balance, fair employment conditions, unacceptable behaviour and complaint resolution, and working with minority groups.

In addition to their responsibility to report against the action items in the WEDP, Groups and Services were encouraged to initiate further actions to promote awareness and good business practices in equity and diversity matters. This report focuses on the success of ongoing initiatives and innovative ideas that have been incorporated into the workplace.

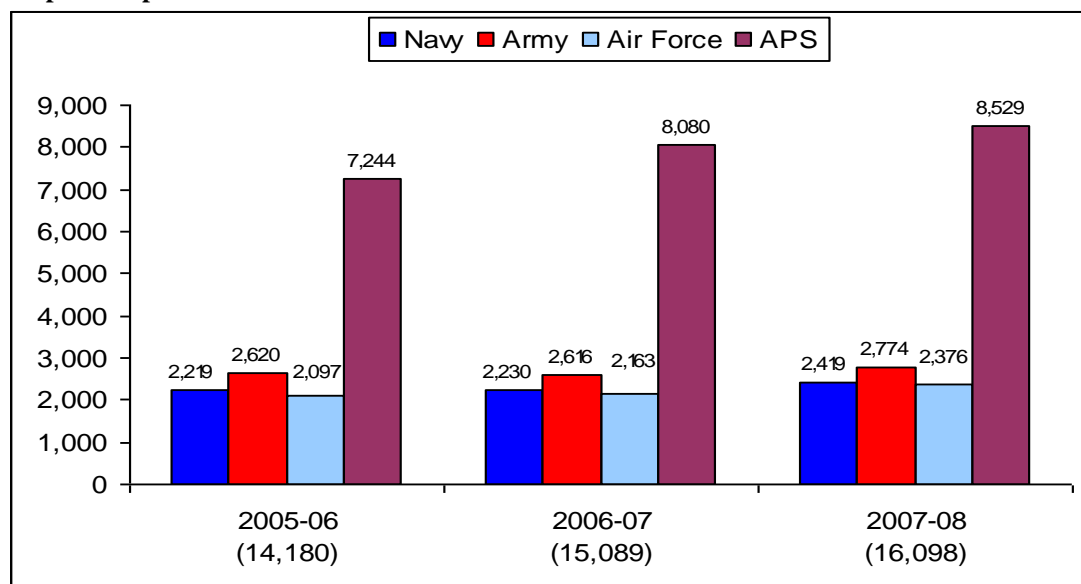
Diversity

Defence offers a wide range of employment opportunities for Australians. At 30 June 2008, the workforce comprised 55,442 Australian Defence Force (ADF) members of the Navy, Army and Air Force and 21,562 Australian Public Service employees.² Defence personnel come from over 21 ancestral backgrounds and speak over 36 different languages at home. Defence employs increasing numbers of women, Indigenous Australians and people with disability. Graphs 1-5 show these representations³.

Graph 1: Gender Diversity in Defence at 30 June 2008



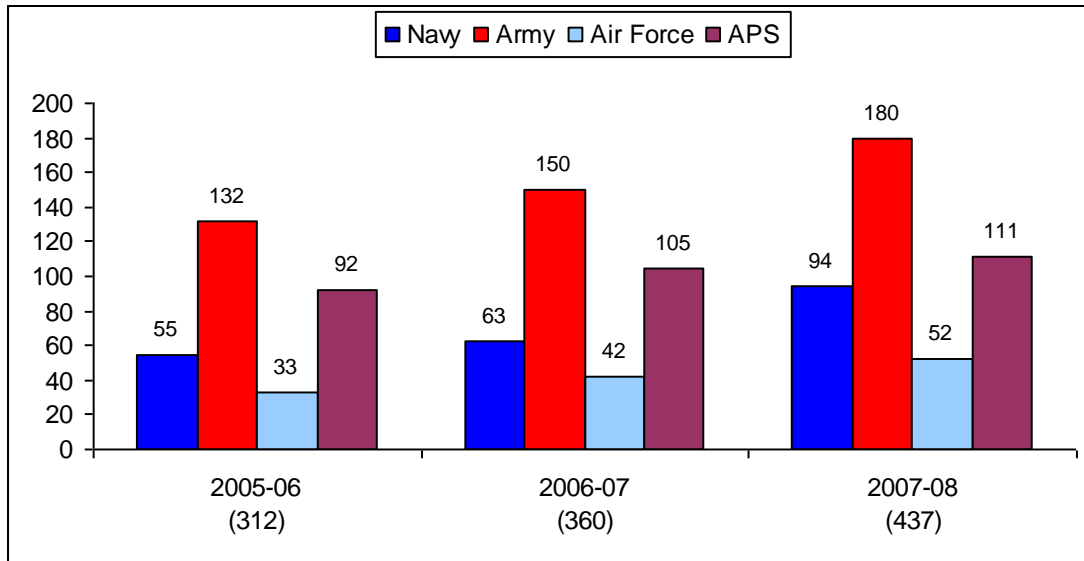
Graph 2: Representation of women in Defence FY 2005-06 to FY 2007-08



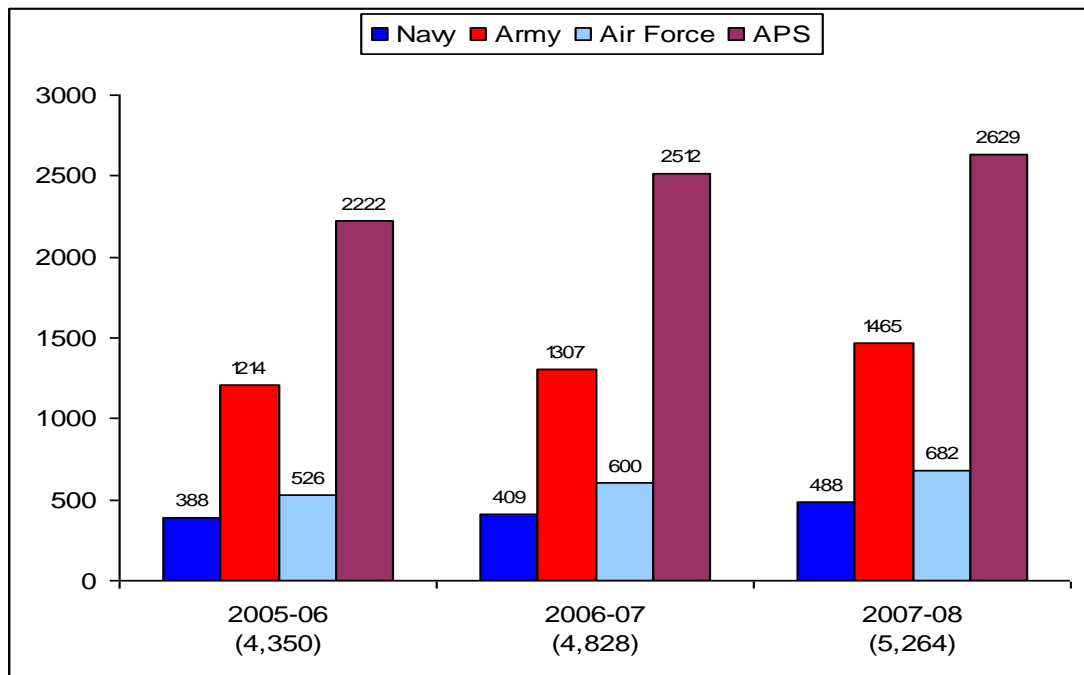
² PMKeys Equity and Diversity Data Cube

³ Figures for Navy, Army and Air Force include full-time personnel and Reservists on continuous full-time service. Civilian figures include Defence Materiel Organisation. Graphs 3-5 show personnel who have voluntarily self-identified themselves as ATSI, NESB or PWD.

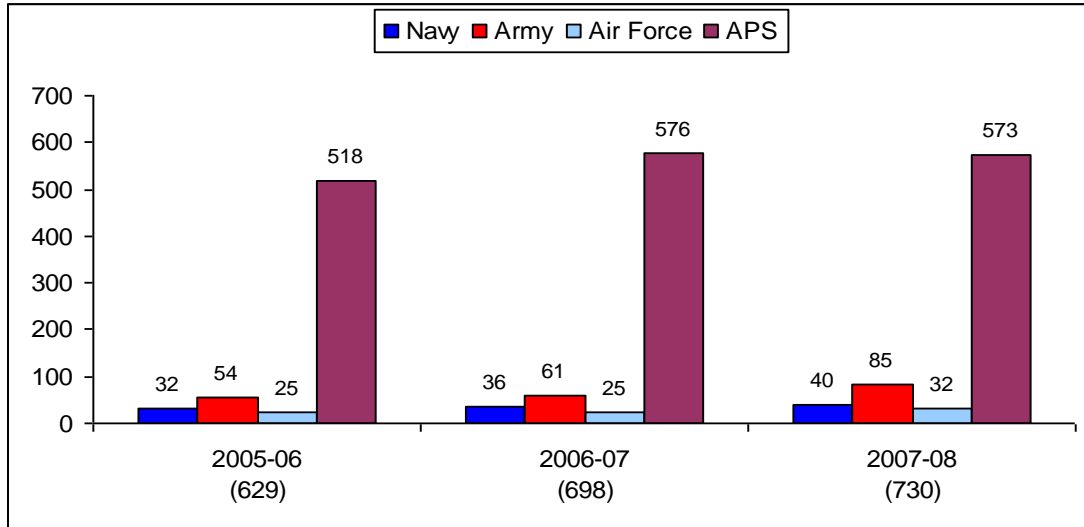
Graph 3. Representation of Aboriginals and Torres Straight Islanders (ATSI) in Defence FY 2005-06 to FY 2007-08



Graph 4. Representation of personnel from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB) in Defence FY 2005-06 to FY 2007-08



Graph 5. Representation of personnel with disability in Defence FY 2005-06 to FY 2007-08



Defence is committed to becoming more representative of the Australian community and has introduced new initiatives into the workplace to attract and retain a diverse workforce. A selection of these initiatives is detailed below:

Ongoing initiatives

- The Defence Reconciliation Action Plan aims to raise cultural awareness, increase recruitment and retention opportunities for Indigenous Australians and enhance Defence's reputation for the management and conservation of significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sites on Defence land.
- The Defence Disability Management Strategy, in accordance with the Commonwealth Disability Strategy, provides a framework for Groups and Services to ensure they meet the needs of people with a disability.
- The National Indigenous Cadetship Project sponsors Indigenous Australians through full time tertiary study.
- The Defence Indigenous Study Award sponsors Indigenous Defence APS personnel through full time tertiary study.
- Cultural Awareness training facilitates greater understanding of cross-cultural issues for operational effectiveness, integration of a unit, or to better understand the local environment.
- The ongoing contract with Koomarri 'Jobmatch' provides employment for people with intellectual disability in support roles at the Campbell Park offices.
- The Defence Assistive Technology Program funds software and equipment to assist employees with a disability to undertake their work and contribute equally towards achieving Defence's goals.

- Defence promoted a number of days including International Day for people with DisAbility, International Women's Day, White Ribbon Day, Harmony day and the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee to raise awareness and celebrate diversity in Defence.
- The Defence people management system *PMKeyS* has a number of accessibility features including webpage development standards regarding colours, layout and text to enable use for people with disability such as colour blindness, and also the ability to increase text size.
- The Defence Materiel Organisation's (DMO) Indigenous Australian Engineering Summer School encourages young Indigenous Australians to consider alternative careers as engineers.

New initiatives

- The Chief of the Defence Force initiated an external reference group on women during the reporting period. Members of the reference group are senior women who have a track-record of success in male-dominated industries and professions or who have been responsible for innovative strategies to increase the participation of women in their workplaces.
- The Minister for Defence Science and Personnel initiated a series of nationwide roundtable meetings with women across Defence including all ranks and Services to gain a more intimate and personal view of the issues Defence women face throughout their careers. These meetings intend to challenge issues Defence is experiencing with the attraction, recruitment and retention of women into the military. The first roundtable meeting was held in May 2008.
- The Women's Recruitment and Retention Strategy was launched by Defence Force Recruiting and aims to promote 'good news' stories and provide support to women as they move through the recruitment process and their careers.
- The Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Strategy seeks to increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate more fully in the ADF and Defence APS workforce by creating alternative pathways for employment, career and professional development opportunities.
- Navy recruited personnel of the Sikh religion for the first time this year, and is exploring proposed amendments to the uniform standards due to religious constraints.
- NORFORCE (North West Mobile Force) has developed a language, literacy and numeracy academy to assist in bridging the educational gap between Regional Force Surveillance List and General Reserve applicants.
- The Chief Information Officer Group (CIOG) has put strategies in place to improve the timeliness of installation of assistive software, such as Dragon Naturally Speaking, Zoom-MAX.

- Throughout the reporting period, the needs of ethnic and cultural minorities and people with disability have been taken into account in the development and implementation of e-recruitment, onepac, and CAMPUS (online training) upgrades.

Proposed initiatives

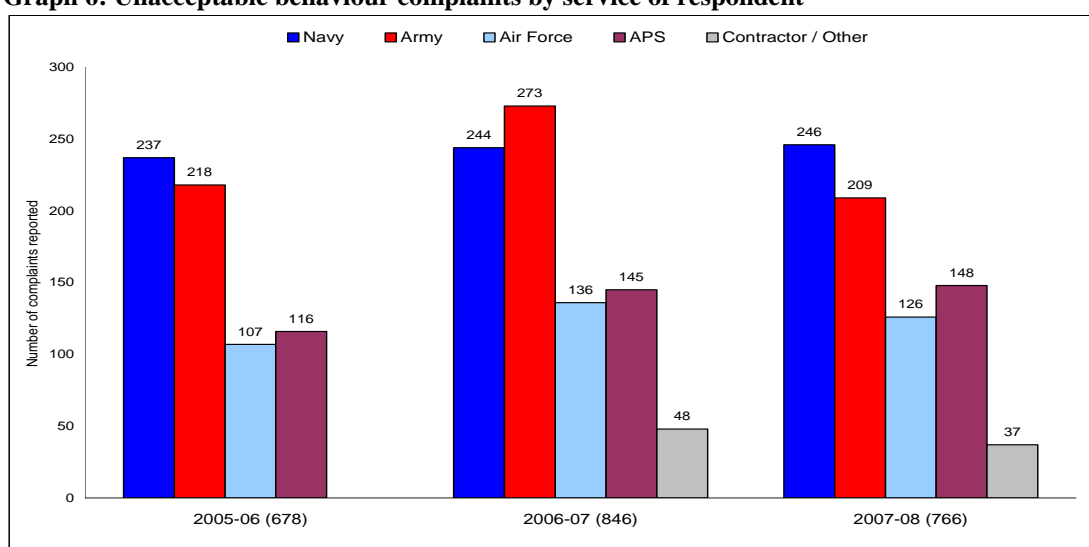
- Creating a new directorate within the FR branch to focus solely on Indigenous affairs.
- The Army is developing a female leaders' mentor program to increase the female participation rate within the Army and to complement the current ADF strategies to improve female retention.
- The Army is developing an Indigenous development program that will provide Indigenous personnel in remote localities with the opportunity to obtain military, technical and life skills. These skills will be transferable back to their communities and increase their opportunities to undertake service in the ADF.
- Revision of the Defence Disability Management Strategy 2004-2007 and development of the Defence Disability Action Plan.
- Introduction of the Multicultural Recruitment Strategy to engage with those from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds to promote the ADF as an inclusive employer and to make the ADF more representative of the Australian community.
- A proposed expansion of the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) Physical Employment Standards Project to identify the inherent physical requirements of the various Australian Defence Force employment categories and provide relevant information to inform policy positions on transfer between employment categories, return to work following injury, and the employment of women.
- The Defence Business Training Centre has plans to test the compatibility of screen reader software with CAMPUS in the next financial year.
- Defence Support Group (DSG) has plans to update the Frequently Asked Questions within CAMPUS to include information about equity and diversity.
- There is a Defence Information Environment Project planned to provide a PMKeyS Home Portal. This feature would extend access to personnel who have home based work arrangements, are located overseas, are Reserve members or who by the nature of their work do not have regular computer access.
- CIOG is organising governance arrangements for addressing intranet accessibility and assessing it against the World Wide Web Consortium guidelines.

Equity and Unacceptable Behaviour

Defence is committed to embedding the principles of equity and diversity into its everyday work practices and eliminating unacceptable behaviour in the workplace.

There were 766 complaints of unacceptable behaviour reported to the Directorate of Rights and Responsibilities in the FR Branch during FY 2007-08. This is a 9% decrease in reporting compared with the previous year. The reduction in complaints involving an Army respondent accounted for most of the overall decrease. The totals for the other services have remained reasonably consistent over the last three years. Graph 6 represents a comparison between the total numbers of reported complaints each year during the period FY 2005-06 to FY 2007-08.

Graph 6: Unacceptable behaviour complaints by service of respondent

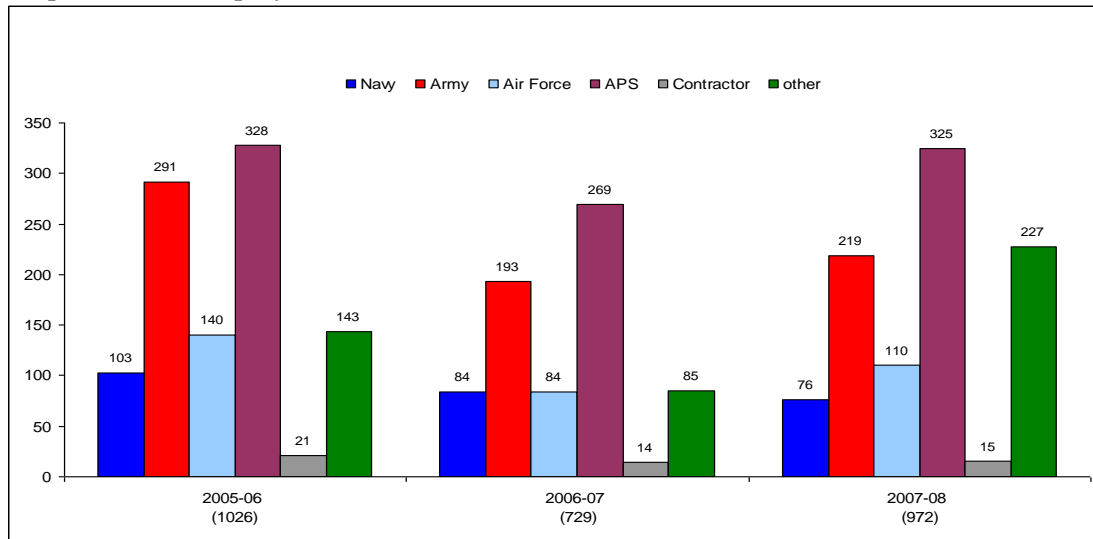


Everyone has the right to work in a fair and equitable workplace. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with at the lowest possible level, and as effectively and efficiently as possible. For this to occur, Defence continuously introduces and reviews initiatives and support mechanisms for personnel. A selection of initiatives is listed below:

Ongoing initiatives

- The Defence Collective Agreement 2006-2009 (DeCA) incorporates equity and diversity in agreement principles and details expectations associated with values-based behaviour.
- The Defence Equity Advice Line (DEAL) is a confidential information and referral service for Defence personnel and their families for advice regarding any form of unacceptable behaviour. Graph 7 shows the number of calls to the DEAL by Service, APS, contractor and other from FY 2005-06 to FY 2007-08. The large increase in DEAL calls categorised as 'other' is in part due to a recent trend of personnel being referred to and using the DEAL to raise a wide range of workplace issues unrelated to equity and diversity.

Graph 7: Defence Equity Advice Line Callers FY 2005-06 to FY 2007-08



- Annual mandatory Equity and Diversity training is a requirement for all Defence personnel, either on-line or face-to-face.
- The Equity Advisor (EA) Network is approximately 4100 strong and provides Defence personnel with information and options for the resolution of workplace equity and diversity issues. The network receives ongoing professional development through meetings and conferences, and new EAs receive ongoing support and training.
- There is a range of online courses and resources available on the FR website, as well as face-to-face training courses such as the Equity and Diversity Workshops for Commanders, Managers and Supervisors.

New initiatives

- Phase one of an automated complaints management and tracking system, ComTrack, went into production on 16 Dec 2007 and provided complaint management for Redress of Grievances, Review of Actions, Australian Human Rights Commission, Merit Protection Commission and unacceptable behaviour complaint types.
- The Directorate of Alternate Resolutions and Equity launched the Fairness and Resolution Centres around Australia and information articles were published in the Defence newspapers and the Defence magazine.
- The Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation (DIGO) established an Equity Adviser Focus Group that meets on a quarterly basis to discuss relevant issues regarding equity and diversity.

- DSTO has participated in a Bullying Education and Awareness trial run by Comcare, and has since ensured that terminology used in publications reflects the culture of equity and diversity of DSTO.
- CIOG have centralised recruitment to ensure that all selection reports have been submitted to the Group Human Resources Directorate before submission to DSG for action.
- Navy personnel applying for Recruit School staff positions are required to undertake a selection process before being posted to ensure that they are both aware of the nature of that working environment, and are suitable for the role.
- All new starters in the Intelligence, Security and International Policy (IS&IP) Group attend a 'Due Diligence' program as part of the Induction Process, which covers Equity and Diversity, the Unacceptable Behaviour Reporting process, availability of Equity Advisors and the Code of Conduct.
- Defence promotes the best possible balance between work and personal lives. IS&IP Group have been particularly active in this area throughout the reporting period. They have introduced weekly newsletters providing advice on flexible working conditions, initiated The Health and Wellbeing Program that encompasses the principles of work/life balance, and introduced a Vacation Care Program for employees with children. Additionally, they have implemented Annual Health Week, which provides health assessments, flu vaccinations, DIGO Walk and Run, and education on healthy diets, coping with change and physiotherapy exercises.
- The Army provides mentors to facilitate induction of Indigenous Reserve soldiers in Regional Force Surveillance Units and conducts cultural awareness training where appropriate.
- The Directorate of Alternative Resolutions and Equity facilitated a large number of interventions during the period. The numbers are expected to increase throughout the next FY with continued dedication to and promotion of alternative dispute options.

Proposed initiatives

- ComTrack is scheduled for the implementation of subsequent phases in early 2009. This will provide management tools for Inspector General ADF Submissions, ADR practice and Electronic Self Service for complaint submission and progress monitoring.
- A Defence Privacy Framework has been developed to guide the development of future policy. A Defence Instruction on Managing Privacy Complaints in Defence has been drafted and is currently undergoing consultation with Defence groups. The Australian Law Reform Commission has recently made recommendations to government on future requirements for an agency's privacy policy. These recommendations, along with the framework and the complaint handling policy will be addressed in the future policy.

Conclusion

Defence is continuously incorporating new initiatives into the workplace to promote the acceptance of all skill sets, experiences and cultural backgrounds of personnel, whilst also striving to eliminate unacceptable behaviour to provide a fair and equitable workplace for everyone.

There have been significant achievements in equity and diversity standards within Defence since the introduction of the WEDP in 1998. Defence Groups and Services are encouraged to continue to implement the current WEDP and to initiate their own equity and diversity actions in 2008-09.