

Department of Defence

DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL INSTRUCTION NO 1/2002

13 May 2002

Note: These instructions are of a permanent nature and remain in force until cancelled. They should be reviewed by the sponsor every three years and repromulgated only where a significant change of content is necessary. Publications can be accessed on the Defence Intranet at <http://defweb.cbr.defence.gov.au/home/documents/departme.htm>

DEFENCE MULTICULTURAL POLICY

Introduction

1. Defence is committed to Australian Multiculturalism. Australian human rights legislation, in particular the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* and the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986*, the diverse composition of Australian society and the Government's *A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia 1999* have an impact on the way a diverse workforce is managed.
2. The Defence multicultural policy is based on the *New Agenda* and the relevant Australian human rights legislation.

Purpose

3. The purpose of this instruction is to state the policy on Australian Multiculturalism in the Department of Defence.

Policy

4. Defence requires that all personnel demonstrate a respect for all cultures and religions and contribute to the creation of an inclusive workplace free from racial discrimination and racist behaviour.
5. On posting overseas, all personnel are to demonstrate a respect for the local people, culture and religious beliefs, and local laws.

AUSTRALIAN MULTICULTURALISM

6. Australian Multiculturalism recognises and celebrates Australia's cultural diversity. It accepts and respects the right of all Australians to express and share their individual cultural heritage within an overriding commitment to Australia and its laws and the basic structures and values of Australian democracy. The term also refers specifically to the strategies, policies and programs that are designed to:
 - a. make administrative, social and economic infrastructure more responsive to the rights, obligations and needs of a culturally diverse population;
 - b. promote social harmony among the different cultural groups in Australia; and
 - c. optimise the benefits of cultural diversity for all Australians.

Cultural respect

7. Defence recognises and respects the significance of people's culture and beliefs and expects all personnel to treat other people's culture with respect and dignity. This cultural respect gives all Australians, subject to the law, the right to express their own culture and beliefs and obliges them to accept the right of others to do the same.

Increasing capability

8. Cultural diversity is a source of strength that makes the Defence Organisation more effective in carrying out its mission.

9. In striving to become an employer of choice, Defence must be seen as an open, inclusive organisation that is able to harness the attributes brought by more diversified skill sets. This is particularly so in knowledge-based capabilities, such as language proficiency, which will enhance our performance and productivity. Defence believes that the recruitment of people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds will enhance the organisation's international image and lead to a better understanding of how other cultures operate.

Creating an inclusive workplace

10. Irrespective of anyone's country of origin, cultural practices or religious beliefs, Defence seeks to ensure that all personnel are aware of the importance it places on treating everybody in Defence fairly.

11. Defence supports all personnel in meeting their particular needs through access to a range of employment conditions and facilities that will allow them to manage their work and other commitments and responsibilities. Personnel are to be allowed to use the workplace flexibilities provided to access appropriate social, cultural and religious services and facilities where practicable. This includes making allowances, subject to operational or safety requirements, for specific differences based on cultural and religious needs such as dress, diet and funeral rites.

Harassment and discrimination

12. Harassment and discrimination in any form is not tolerated in Defence. Harassment or discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, culture, religion, language and place of birth is unacceptable behaviour and are to be managed in accordance with the relevant unacceptable behaviour policy.

Roles and responsibilities of commanders and managers

13. Commanders and managers are responsible and accountable for equity and diversity in their workplaces. They are required to:

- a. develop a fair and inclusive workplace and eliminate any racial discrimination and harassment;
- b. ensure that all personnel and prospective personnel are valued and treated fairly, on individual merit and with respect and dignity;
- c. ensure that the different skills and knowledge that personnel possess as a result of their background, experiences and perspectives are utilised where appropriate;
- d. identify the communication and development needs of personnel;
- e. encourage personnel to complete Cultural Diversity Awareness training; and
- f. ensure personnel are given an opportunity, where practicable, to practise their cultural and religious requirements.

Roles and responsibilities of members

14. Everyone in Defence has the right to expect to be treated with respect and without harassment.

15. All personnel have an individual responsibility to behave in a manner that:

- a. is fair and treats other people's culture and beliefs with respect and dignity; and
- b. provides an inclusive work environment free from racial discrimination and harassment.

16. All personnel are encouraged to complete Cultural Diversity Awareness training.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND OVERSEAS POSTING

17. It is important when representing Australia and the department that individuals display the standards of conduct and fairness expected.

18. When personnel are posted overseas it is important that they:

- a. respect local people, particularly women and children;
- b. respect the culture of the country that they are in;
- c. respect local religious beliefs and practices; and
- d. respect the local laws.



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EARLIER DEPARTMENTAL CIRCULAR MEMORANDUM CANCELLED: 46/89