COLLABORATION
ROAD TO SUCCESS
Feature stories

Pathway to change
Defence is implementing cultural reforms following the March 7 release of six reviews exploring the organisation’s collective culture

People key to vetting reform
Holistic reform is under way across the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency that will re-establish the organisation as a robust, flexible and customer-service focused business

Mission control
Headquarters Joint Operations Command is the nerve centre of Australian military operations

Cover story
Deputy Secretary People Strategies and Policy, Carmel McGregor, recently spoke to Defence about her new role, what attracted her to the organisation, and how people are integral to capability

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The Chief Information Officer Group is integral to ensuring Defence business runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, as well as ensuring the organisation builds a robust information communication technology capability for the future

The last word

Domestic diarchy – starting a new job in an organisation as large and diverse as Defence can be daunting, but one newcomer had a distinct advantage; like many people, she was already part of the extended Defence family as her husband is an Army officer
ON MARCH 7, I joined the Defence Minister and General Hurley in publicly releasing the six reviews into Defence culture and the Defence response: Pathway to Change: Evolving Defence Culture.

Pathway to Change consolidates the recommendations of the six culture reviews into one integrated plan. This is Defence’s clear commitment to shape our collective attitudes, systems and behaviours in the interests of improving our work practices, our capability, and ensuring the continued support of the Australian public we serve.

General Hurley and I will work closely with the Chief Operating Officer, the Vice Chief of the Defence Force, the Service Chiefs and Deputy Secretary People Strategies and Policy to lead the implementation of the Pathway to Change.

The culture reviews and the Pathway to Change present me with an opportunity to address areas we need to improve, but also to build on the things we do very well—every day of the week, wherever we are in the world.

Harmonised with Defence’s broader reform agenda, the Pathway to Change sets out our newly developed cultural intent: we are trusted, caring, working people who know we can make immediate improvements to the way we do business. However, we must also be mindful that the Pathway to Change is a long journey, requiring continued and focused effort over the long term.

Every person has the capacity to contribute to evolving the Defence culture and creating a workplace with a reputation for excellence and which is inclusive of all.

On a separate issue, after more than 12 months of bargaining, the majority of Defence Australian Public Service employees voted to approve the proposed Defence Enterprise Collective Agreement (DECA) 2012-2014.

Formation of the new DECA will occur after it is assessed by Fair Work Australia. Further information is on page 12. You will all be aware that the government is facing a challenging budget this year. As I have said in the past, Defence cannot expect to be immune from the realities of the Federal budget.

While the budget is yet to be finalised, I can assure you that General Hurley and I are very focused on the department’s finances and the very real pressures we face in trying to achieve the objectives of the 2009 Defence White Paper in the tight fiscal environment we are in.

In closing, I would like to congratulate Mr Steve Moxin on his appointment as Deputy Secretary Intelligence and Security. As a former senior military officer holding positions in the Defence Intelligence Organisation, the Defence Signals Directorate and most recently as Director of the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation, Steve brings a wealth of experience and knowledge that will benefit both the wider Intelligence and Security community and Defence as a whole.

One of my key areas of focus is the Review of Employment Pathways for Australian Public Service Women in the Department of Defence. The review, conducted by Ms Carmel McGregor (former Deputy Australian Public Service Commissioner), looked at the effectiveness of current strategies and proposed recommendations across a range of issues for improving the representation of public service women in Defence. The review identified that Defence, despite employing a high performing female workforce, can better recognise the achievements and abilities of women.

I am very pleased to welcome Carmel to Defence in her new role as Deputy Secretary People Strategies and Policy. Carmel’s review experience and her position in Defence will greatly support the implementation of this review that will see an increased focus on identifying and developing women for leadership roles.

International Women’s Day was celebrated around the world on March 8, to recognise the economic, political and social achievements of women in the past, present and future. We must act actively challenge some of our long standing workplace arrangements and create a collaborative working environment that recognises and supports the vast contribution women have made, and will continue to make, in Defence.

Of course, creating a culture of collaboration and support means more than recognising gender diversity. Workplace diversity includes, but is not limited to, age, physical abilities, religion and sexual orientation. I am proud that Defence is a foundation member of the Pride in Diversity program, Australia’s first and only not-for-profit workplace program designed specifically to assist Australian employers with the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees.

As government employees it is important that we reflect the community we serve. We must, therefore, understand and value diversity and the resulting organisational benefits. Across all levels in Defence, our workforce must comprise inclusive, collaborative and fair minded teams which can work together to encompass our Pathway to Change cultural intent.

Defence is an organisation of talented and hard working people and I know we can make immediate improvements to the way we do business. However, we must also be mindful that the Pathway to Change is a long journey, requiring continued and focused effort over the long term.

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AUSTRALIANS rate the ADF as the most trusted organisation in the country. We are proud of this and we are proud of our international reputation for excellence. But no organisation can maintain such a place of respect if it fails to maintain its standards and behaviours as high as humanly possible. There is no doubt that the culture reviews have drawn attention to Defence's many strong points, strengths we must maintain.

The reviews have also pointed out, however, that there are serious issues that we must address. The Pathway to Change: Evolving Defence Culture we released in March describes the challenge that Defence faces and how we intend to meet that challenge.

Defence is committed to implementing the Pathway to Change strategy to achieve a strong and positive Defence culture. We will examine leadership and accountability to ensure we are promoting responsibility and the values and behaviours that will eliminate unacceptable conduct. In doing so, we will create an organisation that is fair and just.

The Pathway to Change integrates the recommendations of six reviews into a coherent, cohesive plan of action with responsibility for implementation allocated to specific senior Defence leaders. Importantly, the authors of each of the reviews have been supportive of the approach being taken.

At its heart, Pathway to Change is about behaviours – towards Defence and its institutions, and critically to each other. The behaviours – towards Defence and its institutions, and critically to each other. The behaviours – towards Defence and its institutions, and critically to each other. The Pathway to Change strategy to achieve a strong and positive Defence culture. We will examine leadership and accountability to ensure we are promoting responsibility and the values and behaviours that will eliminate unacceptable conduct. In doing so, we will create an organisation that is fair and just.

The reviews have reinforced in my mind that it is not sufficient to talk about 'a few bad apples' when incidents occur in Defence. To quote from the Pathway to Change, this approach implies that such incidents are unsurprising – even routine. It's not an acceptable stance for actions that affect the safety and well-being of our people, and compromise our capability, to be regarded in any way as normal. We should be surprised, angered, embarrassed and saddened any time there is a revelation about unconscionable behaviour by a member of the Defence community. Our reaction should be 'how could it have happened?' and not 'of course things happen'. Pathway to Change will lead us to outcomes where our default behaviour is respectful, just, fair and inclusive.

What we refer to as 'Defence Culture' is a collection of sub cultures. The Navy, Army and Air Force all have their individual cultures shaped over time, as does the public service. Our strategy to bring these together centres on a statement of cultural intent – that "we are trusted to defend, proven to deliver, respectful always." To illustrate our commitment, we have already started work to implement some of the recommendations arising from the review into the treatment of women at the Australian Defence Force Academy that was released in October. Last month, a residential support officer scheme started at the academy to provide peer support to the young officer cadets and midshipmen through the initial stages of their military career. We have started discussions to provide interactive education for all Defence personnel to understand the obligations associated with leadership and accountability. This is closely linked to the need to get it right from the start – by that I mean making sure we instil the right values and behaviours in our people and that they understand the obligations associated with a Defence career. These three behaviour oriented levers are supported by three action levers, ensuring we have the practical measures, consultative processes, structures and support to our efforts. Each of the six levers has been assigned to members of the Defence Committee who will lead and manage their implementation.

The Secretary and I accept that we are accountable for the overall success of this cultural reform program but we are both realists and we recognise this plan is not a quick fix. The type of deep and far reaching reform we are seeking will take time and a sustained effort from all Defence staff over many years to achieve. But make no mistake, we are committed to tackling our cultural challenges at their source.

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"As Defence members we understand that we are quite rightly held to higher standards and greater scrutiny than the majority of Australian society."

– General David Hurley, Chief of the Defence Force
CARMEL McGregor is no stranger to change, in fact, she thrives on it. As someone with extensive experience in public administration, including serving as the Deputy Public Service Commissioner for the last three years, Carmel understands that in order for organisations to evolve, ongoing reform is essential to business agility and ability to deliver capability – a key Defence priority.

Since starting with Defence on March 19, her early assessment of the organisation and the change journey it has embarked upon is positive.

“Defence is large and complex, but people have been very welcoming,” Carmel says. “The commitment people have to the organisation is very apparent and I feel lucky to be joining at this time. My predecessor, Phil Minns, put in train some very successful initiatives, in particular the People in Defence Strategy, which has become a great foundation for the work of People Strategies and Policy Group. My challenge is to build on that.”

Carmel says she was able to gain an appreciation for Defence and its work last year when she led the review of the employment pathways for public service women in Defence, which gave her a sense of what the organisation is like.

“I never thought I’d end up working for Defence during the next phase of its important reform work,” Carmel reflects. “I’ve spent most of my career in social policy organisations but Defence is going through a period of considerable change and the opportunity to be involved was quite compelling.

“I am very keen to implement what I began with the review, as well as be part of the wider and very significant reform agenda.”

Leading the review gave Carmel a chance to engage with people across Defence. She says she was “fascinated” by the organisation and impressed by the many diverse areas of operation.

“In particular, during the review process I had the opportunity to meet many Defence women through focus groups and in one-on-one meetings. Their passion and desire to contribute to Defence operations was evident and I want to optimise that. There are still some unconscious barriers that prevent women from achieving all they can, and I’d like Defence to be a leader in breaking through.”

Many women expressed concern about the lack of work-life balance in Defence during the review process but, as Carmel makes clear, the policies exist and are quite robust.

“The policies are there. I believe they are not used to their full potential because people either don’t know they exist, they’re not sure how to apply them, or managers don’t know how to effectively deal with requests to work flexibly.”

“Defence encourages flexible working arrangements and some are quite groundbreaking.”

But People Strategies and Policy Group’s focus is clearly not simply on raising the profile of women in Defence. There are broader issues around indigenous participation, cultural diversity, and ensuring people with disabilities have the opportunity to contribute to the workforce.

“We need to take a multi-faceted approach,” Carmel continues. “The issues of diversity and inclusion are front and centre but I don’t think we are organised in a way that they get enough recognition or the opportunity to build momentum. I want to change that.”

Every senior leader in Defence says people are the key to capability – and Carmel agrees. “People build capability for organisations. This is very true in Defence and probably better understood given the issue of capability is vital to Defence operations.”
from page 9

“Sometimes being in the human resources arena can be frustrating, but there is something very satisfying about getting the right people in place and developing them, then seeing how that can strengthen an organisation. I am naturally very curious about what motivates people and, while I’ve moved in and out of human resources during my career, something always draws me back.”

In her role as Deputy Secretary People Strategies and Policy, Carmel has a number of priorities. She says implementing the Pathway to Change strategy is critical to moving Defence forward, as is seeing shared services reform through to fruition.

“These are big agendas and success will take a lot of communication and engagement,” she says. “I plan to work closely with the Defence 100 and my peers to ensure the changes required are fully endorsed and encouraged throughout the organisation. It is fundamentally about building capability for the organisation and supporting Defence operations.”

Speaking again about her first few weeks in Defence, Carmel reflects on the nature of the integrated workforce.

“We are all here for a significant purpose. We are one team and I have been touched by the sense of teamwork in the organisation. So let’s continue to work together to support the ADF and focus on Defence’s priorities to ensure the organisation’s continued success.”

KEY PRIORITIES

• Implementing Pathway to Change strategy
• Implementing Defence Enterprise Collective Agreement 2012-2014
• Supporting Defence’s broad reform agenda
• Promoting equity and diversity
• Leadership, learning and development in partnership with the Vice Chief of the Defence Force
• Career and talent management within the public service
• Recruitment and retention
• Seeing the recommendations of review of employment pathways for public service women in Defence through to fruition
• Human resources
• Shared services reform
• Ensuring the successful transition of People Strategies and Policy within the Chief Operating Officer Organisation
• Modelling collaborative behaviours

“I have been touched by the sense of teamwork in the organisation.”

– Carmel McGregor,
Deputy Secretary People Strategies and Policy

Increasing the diversity of the Defence workforce is something on which Deputy Secretary People Strategies and Policy, Carmel McGregor (opposite), wants to focus during her tenure.

Photos: David McClenaghan and Corporal Hamish Paterson
‘Yes’ DECA vote means pay rise

By Lisa Smallacombe

THE majority of Defence’s Australian Public Service people have voted “yes” to the Defence Enterprise Collective Agreement (DECA) 2012-2014.

The vote provider, Orima Research Pty Ltd, advises the breakdown of the vote, which took place from March 28-30, was that 73 per cent of voters approved the proposed DECA, 12,568 employees voted “yes” and 4,663 voted “no”.

Defence public service employee participation in the vote was high, with 23,134 people – 74.6 per cent of the workforce – taking part in the voting process.

Head People Policy, Philippa Crome, says through DECA 2012-2014 Defence has sought to recognise the hard work and dedication of all public service employees in the organisation.

“DECA 2012-2014 has maintained Defence’s position in the top quartile of public service salaries, will recognise and reward performance, and support work-life balance through flexible work practices and leave options,” Philippa says.

“The inclusion of two lump sum payments in the offer has been a particularly important benefit for Defence employees,” she says.

Fair Work Australia approves the enterprise agreement.

“DECA 2012-2014 is a solid offer that builds on the last three years’ agreement and delivers on the commitments we have made to Defence people through DECA,” says Defence Minister,女士

Defence still has some work to do to finalise DECA and will not be official until seven days after Fair Work Australia approves the enterprise agreement.

Philippe says Defence is working to deliver the pay rise as soon as possible. Defence anticipates it could be effective on May 10, with the public service workforce seeing the salary increase in their pay on May 24.

The first of the two lump sum payments ($800) could be paid as early as May 10.

Personal accountability key in workplace health and safety changes


The new laws are intended to provide greater certainty and consistency across Australia, and cover the diverse arrangements often found in the modern workplace.

Director General of the Work Health and Safety Branch, Lindsay Krans, says the changes have provided Defence with the ideal opportunity to review the existing safety risk management processes in all workplaces.

“There are a number of changes in the work health and safety legislation that have impacted on Defence, and these required a cultural change,” Lindsay says.

“The new Act emphasises safety as a personal responsibility. The application of individual responsibility for safety in the workplace, the introduction of criminal law for certain safety breaches, the availability of infringement notices and associated individual penalties and the need for assurance systems impact on Defence and the way it does business.

“Defence leaders not only have a legal, ethical and moral obligation to embrace this important reform, they know the value of committing to health and safety as a strategic imperative. This commitment is being demonstrated at all levels in Defence.”

Under the Work Health and Safety Act, all employees are referred to as ‘workers’, an all encompassing term that includes any person who performs work for Defence in any capacity. This removes many of the limitations of the former legislation. Some managers and workers will also be ‘officers’, which in Defence has been established at the Secretary, Chief of the Defence Forces, Chief Operating Officer, Service Chief and Group Head levels.

“The new laws make it simpler for all officers and workers to practise their roles, responsibilities and rights, regardless of their location within the Defence community,” Lindsay says.

“The new laws mean we now have workplaces where every worker has greater involvement in, and ownership of, work health and safety matters. Defence is a safety conscious organisation but we still have a way to go as people are still being injured at work.”

Preparation for the new regime began in 2000, with the Work Health and Safety Branch helping people across the organisation with preparations for the changeover. Each group and service has a change management program in place and is working towards delivering safe workplaces that meet or exceed the objectives of the new legislation.

The national regulator, Comcare, has indicated that Defence has achieved substantial progress given the size and complexity of the organisation.

An intensive program of work is under way to review and update documents, safety systems, policies and strategies, while a communication program has focused on educating Defence people on various elements of the change program.

“Defence has come a long way in the past eight months and is well advanced in its preparations to deliver safe workplaces consistent with the work health and safety legislation,” Lindsay says.

“However, there remains a substantial amount of work to be done. If Defence does not embrace the opportunity for change as a result of the new legislation, it will fail to protect its people from workplace injury or illness and exposes itself to enforcement action by the regulator.”

The branch has established a portal devoted to work health and safety on its website.

New conference facilities at Russell

THE space that formerly housed the three mess facilities at Russell Offices is being transformed into a conference centre that will contribute to savings and provide a much-needed facility for all Canberra-based people.

The mess facilities were closed in November last year as part of the Defence-wide Hospitality and Catering Review, a strategic reform initiative.

Located on the ground floor of building R2, the centre will comprise four conference rooms, two seminar/meeting rooms (which can be combined), and a large breakout area with DRN access.

Each of the four conference rooms will have video-conference capability, with one featuring a secure VTC system with the capacity to seat 20 people. The availability of such a large secure conference room fills a gap in Defence’s facilities.

The two rooms that can be combined offer the flexibility to conduct large and small seminars, workshops and conferences, while lecture style seating enables up to 100 people to use the space. The four projectors and screens enable numerous set-up options. There is also a breakout area with eight DRN terminals and a kitchenette.

Acting Deputy Secretary Defence Support, Steve Grossakowsky, says the centre’s video-conferencing capability, and capacity to house seminars and workshops, will result in a reduction in travel costs and external venue hire, as well as contribute to strategic savings.

“The centre demonstrates that there are tangible benefits to reform, not just in financial terms but in improved productivity through collaborative workspaces and improved computer access for our increasingly mobile workforce,” Steve says.

The centre is scheduled to open on May 1 and an opening event will be held giving people the opportunity to view the facilities. Visit the Defence Support Group website for further information.

Once complete, people can book rooms by calling Conference Centre Bookings on (02) 6265 6500 or email bookingsacpsn.confrencecentre@defence.gov.au.

AT A GLANCE

– safety is an individual’s responsibility
– criminal law may be applied for certain safety breaches
– infringement notices and individual penalties may be applied for certain safety breaches
– employees are referred to as ‘workers’, meaning any person who performs work for Defence in any capacity
– some managers and workers are now ‘officers’, which in Defence means Secretary, CDF, Associate Secretary, Service Chief and Group Head levels

Defence

Defence
Security award winners celebrate at Australian War Memorial

By Corporal Nick Wiseman

TWELVE Defence people and teams were recognised for their contribution to security at the inaugural Defence Excellence in Security Awards held at the Australian War Memorial on March 27.

The awards featured four categories focusing on security specialists, leaders, teams and individuals, which were open to everyone working for Defence, recognising excellence and outstanding performance in security. Deputy Secretary Intelligence and Security, Steve Meekin, says by acknowledging the efforts of the finalists and winners, security awareness within Defence will strengthen.

“Security can be a tough job; it’s hard work and needs constant attention,” Steve says.

“These awards celebrate the achievements of a number of committed Defence people and will play an integral role in embedding security awareness as a natural part of everyday work.”

The organisers received more than 50 nominations across the categories, highlighting the impressive effort and achievement within security across Defence.

The acting team leader at the Vetting Support Centre within the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency, Vivienne Dawes, was recognised for her exemplary leadership qualities and her ability to mentor and foster an excellent work culture.

Vivienne says being nominated by her team was a reward in itself.

“To know your team thinks so highly of you is very rewarding,” Vivienne says.

“They’re all very hard working and dedicated people — they all deserve something like this.”

Outstanding performance by a security specialist was awarded to Warrant Officer Class 2 Peter Heinrichs from 31 Security Section in Townsville, who identified a shortfall in construction standards of armouries and implemented measures to rectify the problems.

The team award for outstanding contribution to security was jointly awarded to teams from the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO) Munitions Branch and Zabul provinces.

Embedded with the United States 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, known as Task Force Wings, Rotary Wing Group 7 will provide medium-lift helicopter support to ISAF missions throughout Uruzgan, Daykundi, Kandahar and Zabul provinces.

The group is made up of about 60 people primarily from the Townsville-based 5th Aviation Regiment and from across the ADF.

Integration vital to Defence mission

In a recent statement to the people of the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO), Defence Secretary Duncan Lewis reiterated the importance of Defence to work as one integrated team, focused on the same goals and united in the pursuit of the Defence mission.

“We are represented by thousands of smaller teams that are working and collaborating across the department and beyond,” Duncan Lewis says.

“From the infantry section patrolling the mountains of Uruzgan province in Afghanistan, to the project team in Russell Offices in Canberra working on a new acquisition, I can’t stress enough that we are all part of the same team, working to achieve the same objectives.”

“We must keep this in mind to ensure Defence improves its performance. Each team, whether it is a group or service, division, branch or directorate, must work in support of Defence’s broader objectives.”

The Secretary acknowledges that while there has been a tardancy in the past for some to view the DMO as a distinct organisation in its own right, this is not the case.

“The DMO is not separate from Defence as is sometimes wrongly suggested. The DMO is an integral part of Defence and must be so to produce the integrated and ‘joined-up’ effect we seek,” he says.

The Secretary says the DMO must be armoured in both the capability development process and the capability delivery aspects of the department, and has asked DMO efforts to focus on the frequency, quality and strength of personal and professional linkages across the whole Defence organisation to improve integration, as well as uniformity in business practice and culture.
Fitting reward for DIGO team

By Jenny Gianakis

THE team from the Bendigo-based Geospatial Analysis Centre within the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation were presented with a joint Secretary and CDF Commendation last year. The commendation was presented in recognition of the outstanding achievements the Geospatial Analysis Centre has made in changing business processes to enhance the support provided to Defence and significant ongoing cost reductions.

The team at the Geospatial Analysis Centre has embraced strategic reform. They have changed the way they do business, are smarter in the way they work, are using simplified processes and removing duplication. Most importantly, they are driving for continuous improvement and proving they understand that the resources they are entrusted with are scarce and must be used wisely. Through a review process, initiated and driven internally, significant productivity improvements have occurred.

The team is conducting a long term project to re-map Papua New Guinea. As a result of self-initiated business process reform, the project will now be completed in half the projected time and deliver the planned mapping products, plus more detailed mapping of 35 key centres. It will also save printing costs of about half a million dollars, as well as provide a local print on demand capability in Port Moresby.

The initial reform effort by people at the Geospatial Analysis Centre has continued with ongoing improvements to business processes, including shared savings with Defence geospatial partners such as the Royal Australian Navy’s Hydrographer. A new study of geospatial support to military aviation will also deliver enhanced services and further savings.

DEFENCE is upgrading the access control standard of the Defence Common Access Card to a more robust technology.

Involving the replacement of all common access cards, the upgrade will start with cards that are used for electronic access control systems and finish with cards that are not. Developed in consultation with Defence security agencies, the production and supply of the new technology began in March.

The Directorate of Security and Emergency Management within the Defence Support Group will work closely with regions and security officers to transition individuals, units and bases to the new technology, which will replace all existing common access cards and includes entry and exit doors, barriers and electronic key safes.

The project will replace more than 50,000 cards used for electronic access control purposes. Most of the production will occur between April and June this year, with an initial focus on the ACT – the greatest number of cards used for electronic access control systems is in this area.

The replacement phase of the upgrade is an extensive process and requires the involvement of every person in Defence.

Step one – Upgrade Readers

The upgrade of card readers throughout workplaces will begin with the ACT up to June 2012 and will follow in the regions in the second half of 2012.

Step two – ACT Transition

Everyone in the ACT will complete a sponsorship form and be re-issued a common access card by passing through a pass office. To ease the transition process, an additional eight pass offices will be established around the ACT up to June 2012 and will follow in the regions in the second half of 2012.

Step three – Regional Transition

Users of electronic access control systems will be singled out for transition within the regions. Like the ACT, users will complete a sponsorship form. The form will generate the central production of a pass, which will be distributed to users through the sponsor identified on the sponsorship application form. The card will not be issued until the new card readers are installed at the relevant base.

Step four – Contractor Transition

Contractors will be issued replacement cards through the standard pass office once readers are installed at the sites they need to access.

The remaining cards (not used for electronic access purposes) will be issued with the new card when their existing card expires.

To most, the new card will not appear any different to the card they currently carry. What will change is the improved security benefit for Defence and its workforce:

- a robust technology that is not susceptible to compromise;
- a new key diversification protocol that prevents Defence from having to replace cards / readers in the event a card is cloned and an access control system is attacked;
- a rationalisation of access control cards with the opportunity for people to discard old / superseded cards without prejudice;
- an opportunity to purge access control systems of redundant card data;
- a high level of confidence that individuals in your workplace are authorised to be there.

Keep track of developments at the Directorate of Security and Emergency Management intranet site.

Steve Meekin new Deputy Secretary

Steve Meekin is officially Deputy Secretary Intelligence and Security.

Defence Secretary Duncan Lewis made the announcement on March 19.

“I congratulate Steve on his appointment and look forward to working with him in this important role,” he says.

Steve was appointed as Director of the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation in 2010. He served for many years in the Army, reaching the rank of major general. He has also held a number of senior positions in the Defence Intelligence Organisation and the Defence Signals Directorate.

The Secretary extended his thanks to Ian McKenzie, who acted in the Deputy Secretary position until February following the departure of Stephen Merchant last year.

Di Harris is acting as Director of the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation.
Pathway to change

Defence culture has been under review for some time, sparked by an incident at the Australian Defence Force Academy last year that cast a shadow over the entire organisation. In early March, the findings and recommendations of the reviews were announced, paving the way for Defence to move forward.

DEFENCE is implementing cultural reforms following the March 7 release of six reviews exploring the organisation’s collective culture. Released by Defence Minister Stephen Smith, Defence Secretary Duncan Lewis and CDF General David Hurley, the reviews cover the personal conduct of ADF personnel, use of alcohol in the ADF, use of social media in Defence, APS women’s leadership pathways, management of incidents and complaints, and allegations of sexual and other abuse in Defence. A report into the ‘Skype incident’ at the Australian Defence Force Academy in 2011, which prompted the reviews, will not be made public because of privacy concerns and an ongoing police investigation.

The department’s response to the culture reviews, titled Pathway to Change: Evolving Defence Culture, was also released on March 7 and consolidates the recommendations of the six reviews into one integrated plan, with implementation responsibilities being established for Defence leaders. Duncan Lewis says the Pathway to Change strategy is the centrepiece of how Defence will move forward.

“The ADF and I are both completely committed to this process and will work together to reform the Defence organisation and shape its culture into the future,” Duncan Lewis says.

“This is a major undertaking – we want to transform Defence into a more adaptive, innovative and agile organisation.

“Every person in Defence needs to understand the content of these reviews and to take serious stock of how we relate to one another in the workplace, and how we relate to the community at large. We have to retain what is good and we have to actively redress what is not.”

According to the Secretary, the pathway of cultural change has begun and will require continued effort as the organisation moves forward.

“It is a journey and it’s going to take some time,” he says.

He also emphasised that Defence is made up of highly talented people who are doing difficult jobs in very challenging circumstances.

“They do it well and I’m very proud of the organisation that CDF and I lead. Nonetheless, the reviews’ findings show that we have some problems that need fixing. These problems are real and can’t be dismissed.”

General Hurley says the ADF has had a mirror, in the form of six reviews, held up to it over the past 11 months.

“As any of us normally do when we look into a mirror, we see strengths and we see flaws,” General Hurley says.

“The type of deep and far-reaching reform we are seeking will take time and a sustained effort from all Defence people over many years.”

— General David Hurley, Chief of the Defence Force

Moving forward

The Pathway to Change strategy commits everyone in Defence to being their best “on all days and in all ways”.

According to the Secretary and CDF, the strategy will ensure Defence has a culture that delivers success in major strategic reforms and addresses the findings from the recent reviews not only into Defence culture, but Defence performance as well.

“As an organisation, in the eyes of government and the nation, we must be trusted to defend, proven to deliver and respectful always,” they say in an official statement. “This applies as much to the individual services – Navy, Army and Air Force – as to our public service people. And it applies to each of us as individuals – on or off duty. In uniform or not.”

The Pathway to Change strategy is Defence’s statement of cultural intent and builds on Defence’s strengths while recognising that some cultural changes must be made if the organisation is to mature and evolve as an institution and as a community of professionals.

It marks the beginning of a five-year program of integrated and far-reaching efforts to address Defence’s cultural challenges.

The Secretary and CDF will lead the program, while the recently established Organisational Development Unit will plan and drive the cultural change.

“...being their best “on all days and in all ways”.

As of now, the reviews made 109 recommendations, with 85 fully accepted by Defence. The remaining 24 were accepted in principle.

Defence Minister Stephen Smith says the reviews are a frank and sober assessment of the past.

“But it’s also a very constructive and positive way forward,” he says.

Photo: Lauren Black
Defence culture reviews

from page 19

Review of Personal Conduct of ADF Personnel, conducted by Major General Craig Driece. The review found that people were aware of the expectations on them and that a relatively small number failed to live up to those standards. Its recommendations include simplifying policy and the grievance process.

Review of the Use of Alcohol in the ADF, conducted by the Independent Advisory Panel on Alcohol, chaired by Professor Margaret Hamilton. Recommendations of this review include a review of alcohol prices at ADF bases and preparation of an evidence-based alcohol management strategy.

Review of Social Media and Defence, led by Rob Hutton of George Patterson Y&R. This review recommends a review of all Defence policies in relation to social media and a review of social media training.

Review of the Management of Incidents and Complaints, including Civil and Military Jurisdiction, conducted by the Inspector General ADF, Gafco Earley. This review recommends that Defence reduces the current backlog of grievances, simplify training and information on complaints, and develop an improved process to manage grievances.

Review of the Employment Pathways for APS Women in the Department of Defence, conducted by then Deputy Public Service Commissioner and now Deputy Secretary People Strategies and Policy, Carmel Mckigg. Defence will begin a rotation program for women at the Senior Executive Service Band 2/3 level within the broader APS, and establish a central maternity leave pool to manage the full-time equivalent liability associated with maternity leave.


Phase 2 of the Review into Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force. In addition to the completed reviews, Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick has begun Phase 2 of her review into the treatment of women in the ADF, focusing on a review of employment pathways for women into senior ranks and leadership of the ADF.

DLa Piper Review. In parallel to the cultural reviews, the law firm DLa Piper is conducting an independent review of allegations of sexual and other forms of abuse in Defence. Volume 1 of the review was provided to the Defence Secretary and Defence Minister late last year. At the time of going to print, Volume 2, which will provide more specific detail, was expected to be completed in the near future. The Minister, after consultation with the Secretary, CGF, and his ministerial colleagues, will then determine the necessary arrangements to further investigate or address the allegations. Overall, some 775 allegations have been deemed to be within the scope of the review, and some are of a serious criminal nature.

Read the reports in full on the Defence website.
ACHIEVING BALANCE

Sandra Ragg became Assistant Secretary Vetting in November last year after many years working for Defence in the Intelligence and Security space. She is married and has a young son, and says achieving balance in all aspects of her life is about focus and discipline.

“Having a family is very grounding,” she says, “especially when you spend the morning playing with toy aeroplanes and trucks!”

“Having a fulfilling professional and personal life is very challenging, but understanding what my values are and having a strong support network allows me to prioritise.

“Having focus and making sure my work hours are appropriate is important. I’ve found I can now make better judgements about what’s important and what’s not – there will always be an email queue.”

Sandra encourages other women in Defence aspiring to senior leadership roles to seek diverse opportunities and to take advantage of Defence’s flexible work arrangements.

People key to vetting reform

By Alisha Welch

The Australian Government Security Vetting Agency is in the midst of significant organisational and cultural reform. Leading the process is Assistant Secretary Vetting, Sandra Ragg, who spoke to Defence about the changes taking place.

“People make these processes and systems work, so the critical thing, from my perspective, is investment in our workforce.”

In line with this, the agency is developing people-focused strategies that include creating a skilling framework and aligning qualifications, formulating induction programs for new starters, as well as implementing health and wellbeing programs.

“We are also doing a lot of work around structured communication and culture development.” Sandra says, “which involves analysing our systems and behaviours and working out what we would like to look like as a quality vetting organisation.

“This will allow us to develop a comprehensive culture plan that relates to the other reform activities taking place. If we conduct this reform program in a holistic and integrated fashion, we will get the quality outcome we are looking for.”

The Defence Security Authority is a geographically dispersed organisation that has representation in every Australian state and territory, barring Tasmania. For this reason, keeping the agency’s people engaged in the change process means Sandra, as leader, has been travelling extensively to meet people face-to-face and provide broader context to the reform agenda.

“It’s important for people to have an understanding of where they fit in the organisation, clarify their expectations and advise them how they can contribute to the change process,” Sandra says.

“I don’t want to place additional stress on the workforce because, in addition to implementing the reforms, we also have to continue with normal business – that is, managing the security clearance process on behalf of government.

“My challenge is balancing the workforce correctly so we can get on with our organisation while we are rebuilding and reshaping our business to deliver our day-to-day and reform priorities. My job is to make sure our people understand what is happening.”

According to Sandra, the next 12 to 18 months will be a challenging but exciting time for the people within the Defence Security Authority.

“While it will require patience, I want people to keep their eye on the end result, which, I think, will be ensuring the organisation is a high quality and robust security vetting agency,” she says.

I also want our stakeholders to know that we’ll be responsive to their needs during this change process, but we are also seeking a little patience and understanding.

We are working to better position the organisation for the future.

My job is to make sure our people understand what is happening.

Assistant Secretary Vetting, Sandra Ragg, is confident the reforms taking place within the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency will better position the organisation for the future. Photo: David McClenaghan
Defence Learning Branch Aims to:

- Simplify education and training policy
- Improve governance and how education and training is managed across Defence
- Allow the department to better understand education and training costs while improving the ability to get value for money
- Promote the cultural changes Defence needs to ensure focus is on getting ‘the right person with the right skills at the right time’
- Develop and promote best practice both within and outside the department
- Ensure a consistent approach to the development and use of education and training technology

Vision for the future

VICE Chief of Defence Force, Air Marshal Mark Binskin, has officially launched the Defence Learning Branch at the Australian Defence College.

The branch, previously known as Defence Education and Training Branch, joined the Australian Defence College within Vice Chief of the Defence Force Group on March 23 (after moving from People Strategies and Policy), and will implement plans for a single Defence-wide education and training system.

“Our success into the future is heavily dependent on the quality of our people. Further developing and refining the management of education and training will provide Australia a clear capability edge,” Air Marshal Binskin says.

“I will be working closely with Deputy Secretary People Strategies and Policy to reform education and training across Defence. The Defence Learning Branch will be a key joint enabler for the delivery of Force2030.”

Commander Australian Defence College, Major General Craig Orme, says the creation of the Defence Learning Branch brings together the branch’s management and governance mechanisms with the college’s delivery arms.

“This is a significant step forward in improving our ability to deliver learning outcomes,” Major General Orme says.

“The Defence Learning Branch will support the scaling of the Defence workforce by setting the strategic direction, coordinating and delivering joint, common and public service education and training.”

The branch is an integrated organisation that draws on all Defence people. ARGUS lists 135 people work in the branch currently, and the services posted in the first of nine ACF people at the start of this year.

Director General Defence Learning Branch, Brigadier Peter Gates, says creating the branch was a collaborative effort.

“It is only with continued collaboration that the branch will be successful,” Brigadier Gates says.

“This spirit of collaboration is reflected in the shared responsibilities of the Vice Chief of the Defence Force and People Strategies and Policy groups to deliver enterprise level education and training outcomes, but also in the interaction between the groups and services to deliver the people capability required to realise Force2030.”

The branch is expected to reach its full capability by the end of 2012, two years earlier than originally planned.
Fellowship honour

By Alisha Welch

Rewarding good work and encouraging innovation is something Defence promotes across the organisation. The annual Secretary of Defence Fellowship is just one way Defence recognises its people and, this year, was presented to a pioneering DSTO scientist.

DEFENCE Secretary Duncan Lewis presented the 2012 Secretary of Defence Fellowship to Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) scientist, Dr Elena Mazourenko, in late February.

Duncan Lewis says Elena brings great credit to the organisation and congratulated her on receipt of the fellowship.

The Secretary of Defence Fellowship is awarded annually to enable a Defence APS employee to undertake one year of full-time postgraduate research at the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

The fellowship comprises salary and up to $15,000 for field research expenses, including travel.

Duncan Lewis says Elena’s research is of great and direct benefit to Defence.

“Dr Mazourenko’s research will deliver a campaign planning and assessment framework intended to improve planning and inform decision making for ADF operations,” he says.

“I’ve made it very clear since beginning as Secretary that my key priority is supporting ADF personnel deployed on operations, and Dr Mazourenko’s work relates directly to this. I congratulate her on her hard work and dedication, and very much look forward to seeing the results of her research project.”

Elena says she feels privileged to have been awarded the fellowship.

“This is a great opportunity to conduct 12 months of uninterrupted research, focusing on a topic of interest and significance to my area of work within DSTO,” Elena says.

“My research will involve an investigation into the methodologies and techniques related to planning and evaluation within a range of academic disciplines that have been applied in a variety of contexts in the civilian domain and proven to be effective and efficient.

“The goal of my work is to demonstrate how those methodologies and techniques can be modified, synthesised and integrated in the military planning and evaluation processes to support decision making. This will be achieved by developing campaign planning and campaign assessment decision support frameworks.”

This research is important to Defence because, by making explicit the logic and assumptions that underpin the planning and assessment of military operations, it will enhance the flexibility and adaptiveness of the ADF in identifying and highlighting the variables that need adjustment in a timely manner.

“This will increase the situational awareness of decision makers, improve the efficiency of the ADF in investing resources, and assist decision makers communicate the intent and rationale behind operational planning to whole of government forums,” Elena says.

Elena’s other work for DSTO includes the development of a proposal for scenario-based training to enable new Headquarters Joint Operations Command staff to assimilate quickly into an interoperability-dependent environment, and operational data processing and analysis for Operation Slipper campaign assessments.

Elena has also conducted environmental research for the Department of Transport and Urban Planning in South Australia, which resulted in better understanding of the ecological footprint of the infrastructure and operation of the public transport sector in the state, and contributed to the development of subsequent environmental policies by the Department of Transport and Urban Planning.

Elena has three children in the ADF, including two sons in the Army and a daughter in the Air Force.
The discovery of a piece of unexploded ordnance on a potential mining site would be cause for concern. But when a company found more than 140 artillery shells filled with a chemical warfare agent, Defence took the lead in making the site safe.

The site at Columboola, 330km west of Brisbane, was originally used as a US Army depot in 1942. Around this time, Australia, with US and British assistance, embarked on a campaign to counter the advance of the Japanese Imperial Army from the north. Under very tight secrecy, Australia acquired about one million chemical weapons, including types of mustard agents and phosgene gas.”

By Leila Fetter

The 2009 discovery required a careful and coordinated response. As a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Australia has international obligations regarding the reporting and destruction of chemical weapons found on its territory. Consequently, the Australian Safeguards and Non-proliferation Office, within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the International Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, were also involved in the approvals process for the munitions destruction project. Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Inspectors visited the site prior to the munitions being destroyed. “We also sourced some expertise in chemical munitions destruction from the US Government, through the Edgewood Chemical and Biological Center at Aberdeen in Maryland,” Colin says. These US experts assisted in aspects of munition preparation, destruction and safety monitoring. People from the Defence Science and Technology Organisation and ADF also supported aspects of the work at key phases, and the Queensland Government assisted with emergency response support from fire and ambulance services.

Colin describes the careful destruction of the munitions. “We brought a transportable munition destruction facility to the site from the US. Each munition was detonated in a controlled explosion inside a chamber where a ‘donor’ explosive charge destroyed both the munition and the chemical agent in one step.”

The 144 munitions were progressively destroyed during April and May 2011 with computer-controlled systems monitoring the entire process. Colin is positive about the effectiveness of this system. “This is a highly effective way of managing all forms of waste, its hazardous gases are neutralised and solid waste can be disposed of appropriately to a licensed recycling facility,” he says. “The entire system is fully enclosed and all emissions and waste are monitored for the presence of any contamination.”

Following the destruction of the munitions found in 2009, a detailed survey is progressing systematically across the entire site. All metal contacts are being excavated. If no further munition items are identified, the project is expected to finish in June this year and the site will be handed back to the mining company.

The lessons we have learned from this project about managing the risks associated with chemical agent contamination have proven invaluable,” Colin says. “It has left Australia with a lasting capability and knowledge on this type of complex clearance project.”
Capability development driving change

By Jessica Worth

It has been eight years since then-Lieutenant General David Hurley (now CDF) stood up the Capability Development Group and became the group’s inaugural Chief. Since that time, the group has become a centre of excellence in Defence capability development.

DEFENCE Secretary Duncan Lewis recently remarked that the creation of the Capability Development Group was one of the most important developments in Defence administration in the last decade. During this time, the group has enabled greater professionalisation of the capability development process, independent contestability and a more strategic view of Defence capabilities.

Under the leadership of the current Chief, Vice Admiral Peter Jones, the group’s workforce of around 390 people provides the Defence senior leadership and government with quality first- and second-pass acquisition proposals for Defence Capability Plan projects. In performing this core role, the group is helping to bring Force 2030 into reality.

Improvements in the capability development and acquisition lifecycle processes are being realised through the ongoing implementation of recommendations from the 2003 Kinnaird and 2008 Mortimer reviews. Additional reform initiatives flowing from the Pappas, Black and Rizzo reviews and, when completed, the Cole Review, will further enhance these processes.

There is also increased focus on organisational and personal accountability, with initiatives including:

- greater emphasis on accountability for delivery of capability residing with the capability manager
- clearer descriptions of roles and responsibilities for individuals (including charters for project and product directors in the Defence Material Organisation)
- following government first- and second-pass approval of Defence Capability Plan projects, joint project directives from the CDF and Secretary to the relevant Service Chief, Group Head and the Chief Executive Officer of the Defence Material Organisation for the continued development, acquisition and introduction into service of the particular capability.

Last year Defence undertook a comprehensive review of the Defence Capability Plan and associated processes to take account of changes in policy direction regarding management of over-programming, project slippage, contingency funding and indexation, and to recommend initiatives to ensure a consistently achievable delivery schedule of projects for government consideration.

The outcomes of the review, currently being considered by the Defence Minister, in part, led to the introduction of the Capability Development Improvement Program now under way.

The improvement program will further improve the rigour, transparency, scrutiny, accuracy and effectiveness of the capability development process, and will have impact across Defence in the development of new capability proposals. This will give government greater confidence that Defence will deliver Defence Capability Plan projects on schedule and to budget.

Vice Admiral Jones considers the Capability Development Improvement Program to be the second wave of Strategic Reform Program capability development reforms.

Capability Development Improvement Program

Chief Capability Development Group Vice Admiral Peter Jones has endorsed 10 improvement initiatives that underpin the Capability Development Improvement Program. He has also established the Capability Development Improvement Office, under the leadership of Air Vice Marshal Brian (Jack) Plenty, to oversee and drive the program.

Initiative 1: introduce rigorous portfolio management (including establishing a portfolio management office)
Initiative 2: simplify documentation set
Initiative 3: enhance project initiation board
Initiative 4: improve committee effectiveness
Initiative 5: integrated program teams
Initiative 6: achieve cost effective emerging technology agreements
Initiative 7: increase early industry input into the Defence Capability Plan
Initiative 8: increase capacity and expertise through industry support
Initiative 9: achieve process and information management alignment
Initiative 10: continue to professionalise the capability development workforce

The implementation of the earlier reviews and the Capability Development Improvement Program are creating a culture of continuous improvement in Capability Development Group, where change is managed as ‘business as usual’.

A senior leadership team within the group is also monitoring the progress and outcomes of the Capability Development Improvement Program and championing continuous improvement.

For further information about the capability development process and Capability Development Improvement Program initiatives, visit the group’s website on the Department of Defence (DFAT).
EVERY man and woman serving on operations overseas, irrespective of theatre, is equally important. This is the message Chief of Joint Operations Command, Lieutenant General Ash Power, made very clear when he spoke to Defence recently about Headquarters Joint Operations Command and the ADF’s operational priorities in 2012 and beyond.

“It is irrelevant whether you are serving in the mountains of Uruzgan province in Afghanistan, a member of a two-person team in Iraq, on a United Nations mission in Africa or working alongside police forces in Solomon Islands – you deserve and will receive equal support from my headquarters,” Lieutenant General Power says to the people force assigned to him.

His pledge to people serving on operations links with his message to those working within Headquarters Joint Operations Command (HQJOC) in Bungendore, just outside of Canberra. He says he and his leadership team are doing everything possible to improve the work-life balance of the people working behind the scenes to make ADF operations a success.

“There are a lot of stresses on the people here,” he says. “They work long hours and potentially don’t see daylight until they take their kids to sporting events on the weekend. We have a great building, but my office has 50 per cent of the windows in it – I am determined to fix that!

“Improving the work-life balance of my people is a priority this year, as well as sustaining that balance over time. The headquarters isn’t built with a bunch of ‘fat’ inside it – people here aren’t walking around looking for work to do. So to successfully manage all the operations and additional missions requires a lot of hard work. The staff officers who pull together to make it happen do an excellent job."

Pulling together, not just within headquarters but with other agencies, is something at which the people of HQJOC are very good, according to their commander.

“When I arrived in May last year, HQJOC had come together from eight locations around Australia,” Lieutenant General Power says. “I think the real success has been synergising our efforts in conjunction with other government agencies in terms of establishing more cohesive planning processes and ensuring we have an integrated approach.

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"Improving the work-life balance of my people is a priority this year, as well as sustaining that balance over time."
– Lieutenant General Ash Power, Chief of Joint Operations Command

Mission control

By Alisha Welch

Headquarters Joint Operations Command is the nerve centre of Australian military operations. Its people work tirelessly to plan and execute operations, exercises and humanitarian assistance missions across Australia and the globe.
Transition

ADF’s key operational priority

CHIEF of Joint Operations Command, Lieutenant General Ash Power, says the operational priorities of the ADF are manifold.

“We are in the process of transitioning our efforts across a range of operational theatres,” Lieutenant General Power says.

“The transition is ongoing in Afghanistan. Hopefully, in the first half of this year, Afghan President Hamid Karzai will announce Uruzgan as the next province to transition to its own security.

“President Karzai will make the final decision and, if that is what he decides, we feel we are in a good position to hand over lead security responsibility and of course battlespace management. It will take around six to 18 months to finalise, so it is conceivable that the work of Mentoring Task Force – Four will be continued by Mentoring Task Force – Five as we go through the transition process.”

This decision will be made in consultation with International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) partners, of which there are 50.

“ISAF is the biggest coalition the world has ever assembled,” Lieutenant General Power says. “It is complex trying to get all 50 national capitals to agree the approach. In May, all the nations involved will meet in Chicago to agree the way ahead. This will make it easier for governments to determine how to support the transition in Afghanistan.”

Transition is a process, not an event, according to Lieutenant General Power, and it is already well under way – not only in Afghanistan but closer to home as well.

“In East Timor the security situation is benign and the first round of presidential and parliamentary elections went well,” Lieutenant General Power says.

“The indigenous forces, both military and police, supported by the United Nations and Australia, created an environment where election security for the first round was successful. We expect that to continue for the second round of the presidential process and into the parliamentary elections. We will now look to transition our efforts in East Timor this year and may even be able to leave the country entirely in an operational sense.”

Operation Anode, the ADF contribution to the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, is also in a process of transition. The mission, supported by the ADF and militaries of New Zealand, Tonga and Papua New Guinea, has made good progress building the capability of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force to take better care of their internal security situation.

Lieutenant General Power says while the focus for HQJOC this year is on transition, the future remains bright.

“The world is a crazy place – there is always something happening.”

– Lieutenant General Ash Power, Chief of Joint Operations Command

“transition is a process, not an event, according to Lieutenant General Power, and it is already well under way – not only in Afghanistan but closer to home as well.”

– Lieutenant General Ash Power, Chief of Joint Operations Command

“there is nothing we do today that isn’t done collaboratively with other agencies.”

– Lieutenant General Ash Power, Chief of Joint Operations Command

“This decision will be made in consultation with International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) partners, of which there are 50.”

– Lieutenant General Ash Power, Chief of Joint Operations Command

”the transition is ongoing in Afghanistan. hopefully, in the first half of this year, Afghan President Hamid Karzai will announce Uruzgan as the next province to transition to its own security.”

– Lieutenant General Ash Power, Chief of Joint Operations Command
“Across the Chief Information Officer Group there is a real sense of just wanting to get on with the job.”

– Greg Farr, Chief Information Officer

The Chief Information Officer Group is integral to ensuring Defence business runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, as well as ensuring the organisation builds a robust information communication technology capability for the future.

### Energy, drive and focus

By Alisha Welch

The people of the Chief Information Officer Group and across Defence will have to keep their heads down and stay focused to continue along the path of reform, according to Chief Information Officer Greg Farr.

He says the next 12 months will see a number of “step out” changes the group is making come to fruition and that the changes being made are, by community standards, enormous.

“This year will be a big year of implementation,” Greg says.

Among the priorities is Joint Project 2047, commonly known as Terrestrial Communications, which will upgrade, replace, standardise and rationalise Defence’s terrestrial communications network. This in turn will deliver business efficiencies, lower costs and achieve a secure and robust information communication technology capability that supports war fighting and business functions.

“The aim is to replace the entire communications framework around Defence and we are now in contract negotiations with two vendors. We are hoping to seek government approval in the third quarter of this year to move the project forward,” Greg says.

Another key focus for the group this year is the migration of Defence’s Primary Data Centre in Canberra to a new Tier 3 rated facility in Sydney, which will provide Defence with a data centre infrastructure capable of meeting the organisation’s future capability and capacity demands.

“The new primary data centre will provide the ability to support related reform initiatives, such as the next generation desktop, and will also provide capacity for the consolidation of more than 280 data centres by the centralised processing project,” Greg says.

The new generation desktop is a key project because it will allow people to access multiple environments across different security domains via a single device on a single screen.

“There are many important initiatives being implemented this year,” Greg says.

“People will now start to see big change, not just incremental change. At the same time, we can’t afford to drop the ball – we have to continue to support military operations and business areas within Defence, and we must continue to make our strategic reform savings. All in all it’s going to be a very big year.”

Greg says the recent appointment of Simon Lewis to the position of Chief Operating Officer, and the fact the Chief Information Officer Group now sits under the Chief Operating Officer organisation, will be of great benefit to Defence.

“It is early days but I can see two major benefits if we collectively make it work properly – and I’m sure we will,” he says. “Firstly, with another senior player in the mix, I think it gives us more horse power in management decision making during a time when everyone is stretched.

“Secondly, with Chief Information Officer, Defence Support and People Strategies and Policy groups, as well as the Strategic Reform Management Office, Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication Division, and Defence Legal all coming under the Chief Operating Officer, there is scope for significant efficiency savings to be achieved through shared services.”

All of this change has prompted Greg and his executive team to initiate a number of cultural change workshops for everyone within the group. Greg says the workshops provide a forum for open debate and is encouraged by the enthusiasm of people to “get on with the job”.

“Across the group there is a real sense of just wanting to get on with the job,” he says. “I hear people say that we’ve done the work to position ourselves for success, now let’s go and do it. I think that’s great. If we can harness that energy, drive and focus, we can make a big change to Defence.”
“While the familiarity made the transition [to Defence] more comfortable (as well as the ability to ring my husband to clarify that I wasn’t looking for some type of biblical boat when first told to ‘go and get my left and right of arc’), a military background is not essential to fitting in at Defence.”

– Alicia Porter, Communication Adviser

How has being a military spouse helped you in your first few months working for Defence?
The military structure and way of life was completely foreign to me before meeting my husband. Had I not been an Army spouse I think I would have been intimidated by aspects of Defence which are unfamiliar to outsiders, such as the language, the culture and the system of rank. I also would not have fully appreciated the impact of operations on serving members and their families. However, while the familiarity made the transition more comfortable (as well as the ability to ring my husband to clarify that I wasn’t looking for some type of biblical boat when first told “to go and get my left and right of arc”), a military background is not essential to fitting in at Defence. This was contrary to my understanding before joining the department and I think we can do more to promote that message in encouraging mobility through the public service.

Did the fact your husband is in the Army influence your decision to apply for a job with Defence?
It was the logical choice for me. It can be very difficult to articulate long-term career aspirations to potential employers when you know you will only be in one place for two or three years with no certainty as to future localities. Conversely, postings are the norm at Defence and the ability to stay with the organisation long-term due to its geographical spread made it an attractive option. It can be disheartening to build up a reputation and a certain level of seniority in a position only to have to start from scratch repeatedly. The department is also very flexible in allowing my move to tie in with the Army posting cycle. The support that Defence provides to the families of serving members was certainly a key factor in my decision to join the department.

Where did you work, and in what roles, prior to moving to Defence?
I started my career as a graduate at the Attorney-General’s Department before working as a legal officer in that department’s Office of International Law. I then moved to Darwin where I was employed as a solicitor at the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency, travelling on the bush court circuit to remote communities, before moving to Toowoomba, where I worked at the community legal centre and was responsible for representing people with mental illnesses and intellectual disabilities facing criminal charges. It’s pretty typical for a military spouse to have a diverse resume after a few postings, but I am fortunate to have had varied and challenging roles in each location.

What have been the highlights of working for Defence?
Working in a supportive and friendly environment has certainly been a highlight, as well as working in such a highly responsive environment which is always a hive of activity. Operating in a nerve centre of sorts in public affairs requires you to be across the topical issues pertinent to the various groups and services and it’s a great way to learn the intricacies of the department quickly. It’s also been rewarding to match the insights I have gained as a military spouse on different postings with my professional experience as a civilian.

What have been the challenges?
The main challenges have centred on the adjustment from a court room setting to the governmental public affairs space and navigating through such a large and complex organisation. My colleagues have been extremely supportive and have imparted a great deal of corporate knowledge to bring me up to speed. I’ve also had to be mindful to mentally separate my roles as an Army spouse and departmental employee to ensure that my personal views on policy that directly impacts on us stays at home.