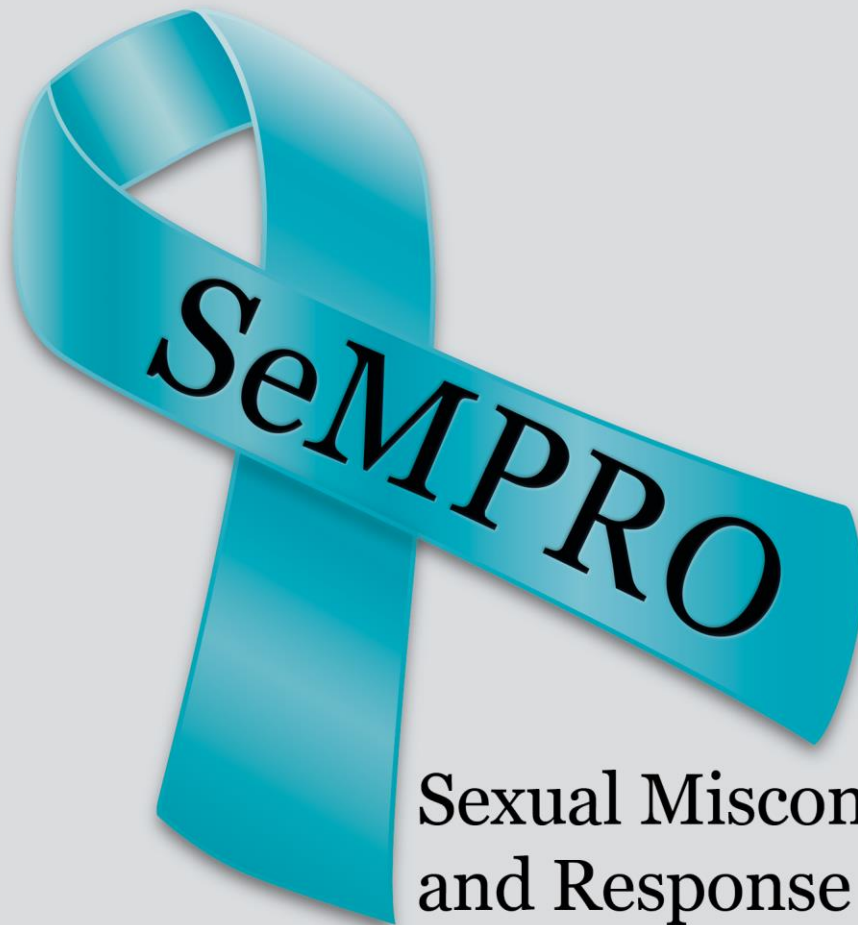




Australian Government
Department of Defence



Sexual Misconduct Prevention
and Response Office

Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office

SeMPRO Annual Report FY 2019–20

1

Victim focused – from care to recovery



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Foreword

The Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office (SeMPRO) is a central part of Defence's cultural change initiatives that promote reporting unwanted sexualised behaviours, help seeking, and prevention. The SeMPRO Annual Report summarises the services provided to Defence personnel in 2019–20.

SeMPRO offers confidential support and case management services to personnel directly impacted by sexual misconduct, assists commanders and managers with incident response and management advice, debriefs personnel working in sensitive areas, and develops and delivers education products on sexual misconduct prevention and management. 1800 SeMPRO is a Defence provided telephone service available to all current and ex-serving Defence personnel and their families, contractors and APS employees, ADF Cadets and their families, and Instructors and Officers of Cadets.

2019–20 in review

COVID-19 posed significant challenges and opportunities during 2019–20. A proportion of support and case management clients have found the uncertainty, and impacts on relationships from a necessary restriction on movements, to heighten feelings of frustration and anxiety. The case management team continues to respond to clients with an awareness of potential impacts that COVID-19 can have on existing trauma.

Travel and gathering size restrictions have substantially decreased the team's ability to deliver in-person training across Defence. SeMPRO has embraced the necessity to create alternatives to face to face training to create a program of interactive virtual classroom products. Virtual delivery using a secure platform has increased accessibility to sexual misconduct incident management and response training, generated outcomes in a more resource effective way, and insured future service delivery in the education stream in the event of other travel restrictions or environmental challenges.

The 2019–20 financial year saw SeMPRO improve pathways for people to access services and refine its current suite of products to amplify its customer focus, accessibility, and visibility in Defence. Key milestones include:

- Expansion and refinement of remote learning capability across a number of training products to provide education product service continuity during COVID-19 and future risks.
- Expansions to the suite of sexual misconduct incident management and response workshops, emphasising skills-based training on trauma informed application of Defence policy, to include senior non-commissioned officers.
- Enhancements to online delivery of the sexual misconduct general awareness course to enable training to be undertaken anywhere, at any time.

Living Defence values, minimising harm, and promoting access

Since its inception in 2013, SeMPRO has directly assisted 2,242¹ clients with support and case management, advice, and debriefing. More than 50,000 personnel have attended briefings, training sessions, and workshops designed to deliver Defence’s messaging on sexual misconduct, to minimise harm with prompt and sensitive incident management, and to improve organisation-wide responses to disclosures and reports.

One of the functions that has evolved over time is providing detailed, one on one, advice to commanders and managers on applying the policy requirements using trauma informed approaches to promote wellbeing. Sexual misconduct incident management advice is part of a three pronged approach to diminishing harm from sexual misconduct in Defence. SeMPRO directly supports impacted individuals; works with commanders, managers, and others to achieve smooth and sensitive organisation-level responses to disclosures and reports; and engages in prevention through education with the broader Defence population.

Our approach

Trauma informed and person centric

SeMPRO’s core business is underpinned by a trauma informed framework. Trauma is the response a person may have to a distressing event that threatens their safety, or the safety of other people, such as being subjected to sexual misconduct². Trauma can have physical and emotional impacts on daily life and in the workplace.



¹ 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2020.

² American Psychiatric Association 2013. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th Edition). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association.

SeMPRO's trauma informed approach emphasises applying five key principles: safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. They are used to enhance the wellbeing of personnel who have been directly or indirectly impacted by sexual misconduct. The trauma informed approach operates alongside the complementary idea of person centricity. Person centricity means to focus on the needs and wishes of the impacted person, aids clients to direct their own recovery, and to feel safe and in control. Person centricity creates opportunities for individuals to rebuild their sense of control and empowerment. Defence uses these approaches when responding to people impacted by sexual misconduct, and in reporting and incident management procedures, to minimise the impacts that trauma can have on personnel. The approach maintains Defence's capability through its personnel.

Tailored, responsive, and appropriate services

- Support and case management clients: Case managers use therapeutic interventions to promote wellbeing, build resilience, and develop self-management skills with personnel subjected to sexual misconduct in Defence. Case managers provide people impacted by sexual misconduct with system navigation, service coordination, and referrals.
- Advice clients: Case managers provide individual advice to commanders, managers, and other Defence personnel to equip them to respond to sexual misconduct reports and disclosures. Case managers assist with systems navigation, to aid clients to best fulfil their duty of care requirements, and suggest specific strategies that build on clients' skills to care for their personnel. Case managers provide strategies and advice for applying Defence's policies to increase the welfare of all personnel and to achieve the best outcomes for Defence's capability.
- Debriefing clients: Case managers provide debriefing and mental health services to personnel exposed to sensitive material at work and to friends, partners, family members, and colleagues of personnel impacted by sexual misconduct. Debriefing services aim to prevent potential psychological injuries that might arise from indirect exposure to trauma and to maintain clients' emotional capacity to continue to aid others.

Table 1 reflects a relatively consistent number of new SeMPRO's clients each year from 2016–17. There were slightly fewer new clients accessing the service in 2019–20 than in 2018–19. A slight increase in demand for support and case management services was visible from 109 new clients in 2018–19 to 125 in 2019–20.

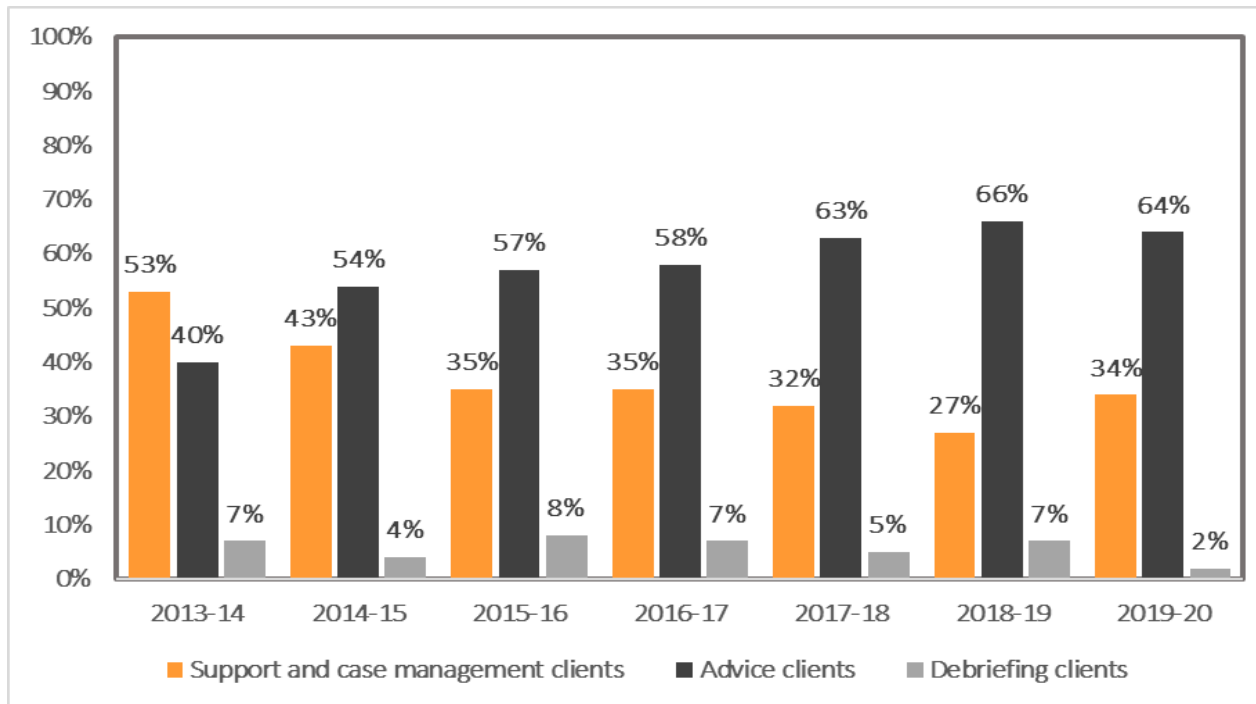
Table 1. Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office new clients from 2013–2020³.

Financial year	Support and case management clients	Advice clients	Debriefing clients	Total
2013–14	93	70	12	175
2014–15	118	147	10	275
2015–16	83	131	19	233
2016–17	135	223	26	384
2017–18	130	253	22	405
2018–19	109	266	27	402
2019–20	125	235	8	368
Total	793	1,325	124	2,242

SeMPRO case managers advised fewer personnel on responding to disclosures and reports in 2019–20 than in the previous two years although advice clients remained the largest client group. The advice SeMPRO provides to personnel works to ensure people directly impacted by sexual misconduct receive responses that foster their welfare and enable their ongoing contributions to Defence’s capability. Effective personnel support and incident management engenders cultural change by cultivating workplaces where reporting and help seeking are encouraged and accessible. Advice clients comprised 64 per cent of SeMPRO’s new clients in 2019–20 as shown in Figure 1 below.

³ The data in Table 1 is collected during service provision and is subject to change as clients reveal additional information. The figures presented in this report reflect the most up to date information available. The figure previously reported for support and case management clients for 2018-19 was 108. The figure previously printed for the number of advice clients in 2018-19 was 265. The total number of new clients in 2018-19 was previously reported as 400.

Figure 1: Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office new clients from 2013–2020 by client type.



Support and case management

SeMPRO psychologists and social workers offer a range of confidential support and case management functions to reduce harm to clients directly impacted by sexual misconduct in Defence. Establishing physical and psychological safety can be challenging for current serving Defence members. SeMPRO case managers help Defence members to navigate their immediate options around work and accommodation where the perpetrator may also live and work. Support and case management clients can access a variety of services from crisis responses for those in immediate distress; therapeutic interventions to increase resilience; and system navigation, service coordination, and referrals to access healthcare and other facilities.

The services are delivered using a dual client model where the person and Defence are simultaneously clients. SeMPRO case managers act for the best interests of the client within Defence rather than representing the client against the organisation. Case managers operate within Defence's complex administrative environment to promote safety and wellbeing and to maintain capability.

Ex-serving members

SeMPRO support and case management services are available to ex-serving Defence personnel. Uptake from the ex-serving community has been small but steady. Table 2 illustrates all support and case management clients across Service categories.

Table 2. Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office support and case management new clients 2013–20 by Service status.

Service status for support and case management clients	
Current serving	502
Ex serving	97
Unknown	108
Not applicable – external to Defence, APS, contractor	86
Total	793

Gender

Sexual misconduct disproportionately impacts women in Australia and also in Defence. The Australian Bureau of Statistics Crime Victimization survey (2019) indicated 83 per cent of self-reported sexual assaults from the previous year were perpetrated against women⁴. Unpublished military police data indicates that women were identified as the impacted person in more than 80 per cent of the sexual misconduct incidents reported to Defence⁵.

SeMPRO services are available to people of all genders across the Defence community who have been impacted by sexual misconduct. Men can perceive sexual misconduct response services as women's spaces. The challenge for SeMPRO is making those services as accessible to everybody as possible.

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2019. Crime Victimization, Australia, 2017–18. ABS cat. No. 4530.0. Canberra, ABS. Crime Victimization, Australia, 2017–18 indicates that women were the person impacted in 83 per cent of the self-reported sexual assaults in the 12 period prior to completing the survey.

⁵ Department of Defence unpublished raw data 2013-2018. Raw Defence incident reporting and military policing data indicate that men were identified as the persons of interest 94.7 per cent of reported incidents, where a person of interest was identified. The same data show that women were identified as the impacted person of the reported sexual misconduct incident in 81.8 per cent of incidents where an impacted person was identified.

Figure 2: SeMPRO support and case management clients by gender 2013–2020.

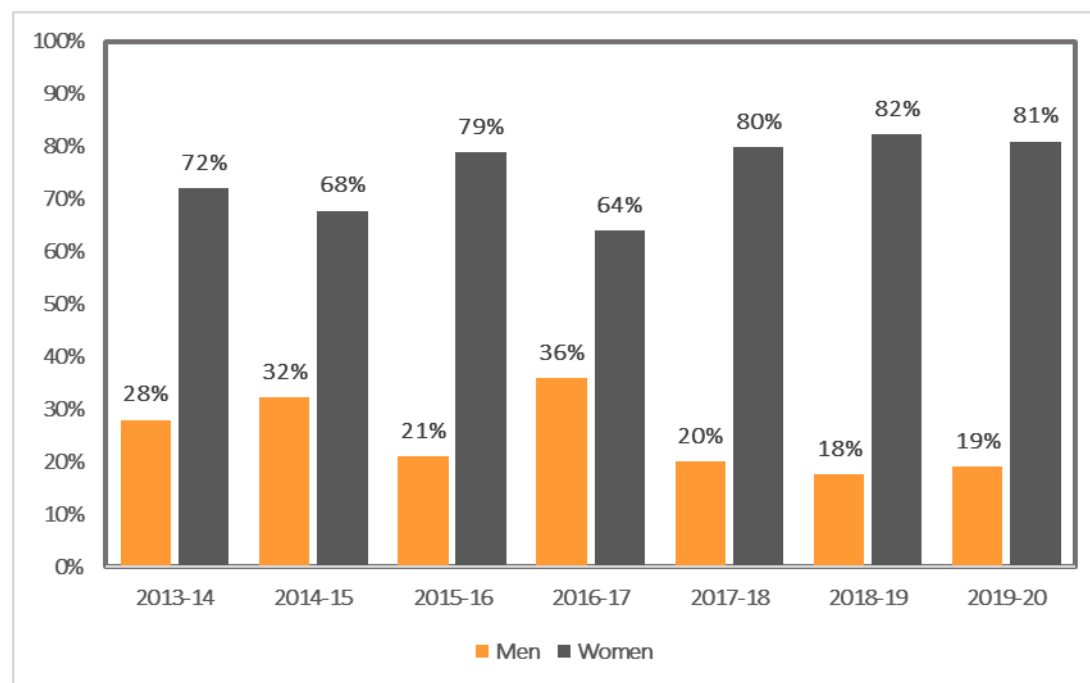


Figure 2 illustrates that women have comprised almost three-quarters of SeMPRO’s support and case management clients since inception in 2013–14. Figure 2 further shows SeMPRO case managers assisted more men in some previous years than might be expected from formal reporting to Defence. The volume of new male support and case management clients peaked at 36 per cent in 2016–17 and fell to 20 per cent of new intakes in 2017–18. The number of new male clients has remained consistent at around 20 per cent in the three years from 2017–18 to 2019–20.

Talking about sexual misconduct is complicated, especially in Defence. Defence attracts and retains women although the majority of the Defence population is male. Increasing the accessibility of sexual misconduct support services to both women and men poses different difficulties. SeMPRO’s sexual misconduct incident management and response education program invites audiences to think about different experiences of sexual misconduct for people of different genders and different needs.

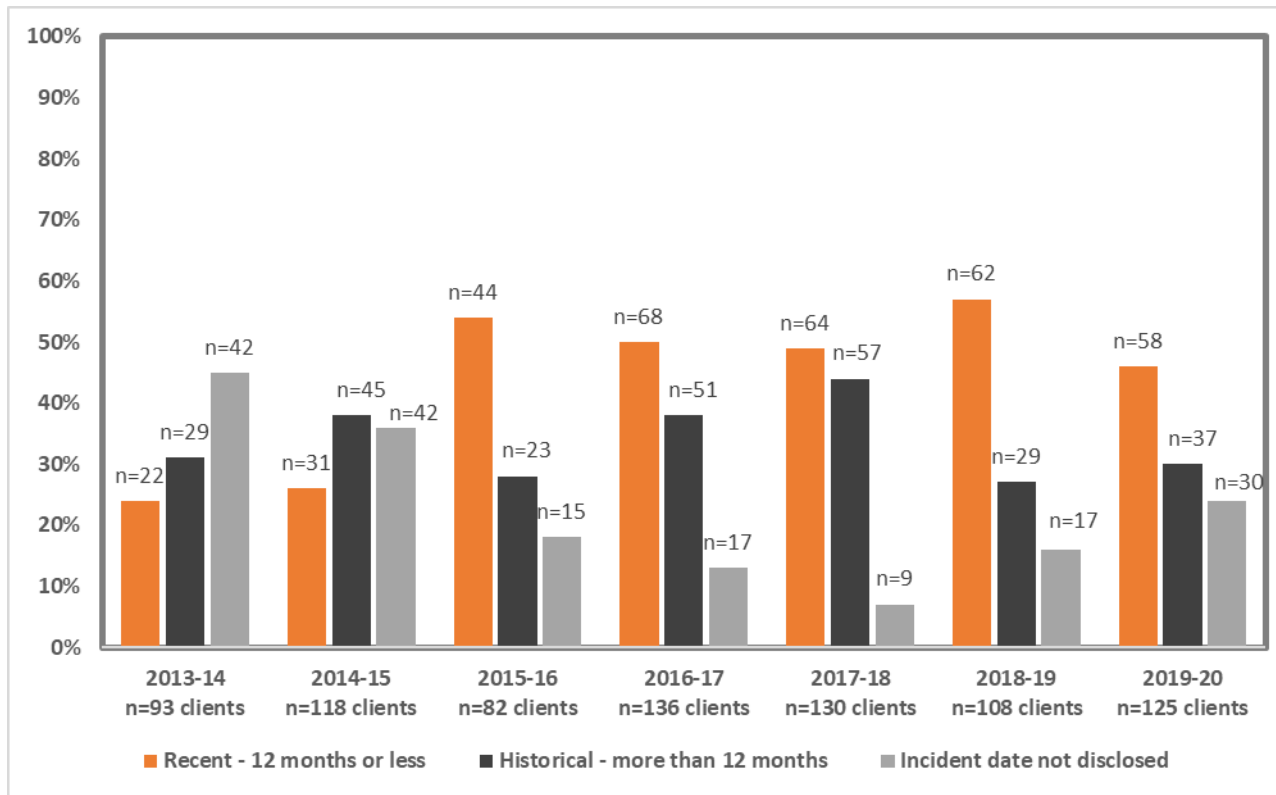
The evidence available from Defence-wide incident reporting and from SeMPRO client data suggests that reporting and help seeking behaviours differ for men and women. The trend over the last four years towards SeMPRO support and case management clients seeking assistance earlier has been driven by female clients (Figure 3 below).

When people seek support

Around one quarter of the support and case management clients in SeMPRO's first two years of operation, from 2013–2015, sought assistance for an incident that occurred within the previous 12 months. In contrast, more than half of new support and case management clients from 2015–16 onwards contacted SeMPRO within 12 months of being subjected to a sexual misconduct incident. Figure 3 illustrates the shift from historical to more recent incidents across SeMPRO's support and case management clients.

Clients of recent sexual misconduct incidents often seek assistance with system navigation and referrals for their next steps. Policing, legal, and other government-provided services for sexual offences operate under legal frameworks that vary across Australian states and territories with different regulations, funding arrangements, and eligibility requirements. SeMPRO case managers guide clients to identify, navigate, and access relevant services in their local area.

Figure 3: SeMPRO support and case management clients' recent and historical experiences 2013–2020.

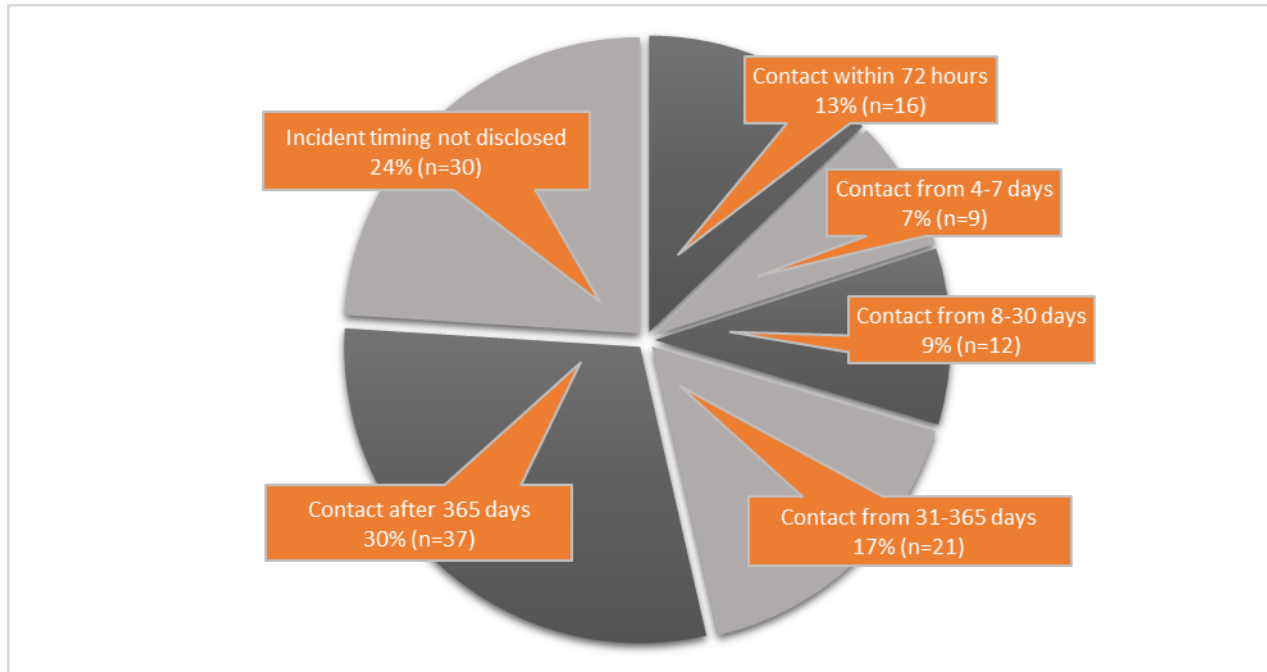


Men who received support and case management services were more likely than women to make initial contact more than 12 months after an incident occurred. Almost 60 per cent of female support and case management clients from 2015–16 onwards requested assistance with a recent incident whereas that figure was 31 per cent for men.

SeMPRO case managers can refer clients to emergency services, such as forensic examinations, emergency contraception, and sexual assault medical care. Services such as forensic examinations and sexual assault medical care are time sensitive. SeMPRO case managers facilitate

clients' access these services quickly if they are required. Figure 4 indicates that support and case management clients tended to make contact after the first month but within a year of a sexual misconduct incident. SeMPRO services have not often been used for crisis response.

Figure 4: Number of days between incident and contact with SeMPRO 2019–20.



Sexual misconduct incident management and response advice

Cultivating work environments that encourage reporting and help seeking behaviour relies on timely and sensitive command and management responses. One of SeMPRO's core roles is to guide Defence personnel to manage sexual misconduct incidents promptly and sensitively. The sexual misconduct incident reporting and management environment in Defence is complex. Personnel have access to multiple avenues within the military and civilian justice systems; and to Defence and community-based health services. SeMPRO assists commanders to manage sexual misconduct incidents in accordance with Defence's legal and policy requirements to encourage a reporting culture in two areas.

First, command and management teams have access to interactive workshops designed to teach skills and strategies for complying with Defence policy in a way that creates safety, trust, and choice for all personnel involved in sexual misconduct incidents while continuing to meet operational demands. The workshops aim to standardise Defence's response to reported sexual misconduct incidents by targeting individual skills and knowledge across commanders and managers. Participants are guided through using trauma informed approaches to applying Defence policy through a scenario-based learning experience.

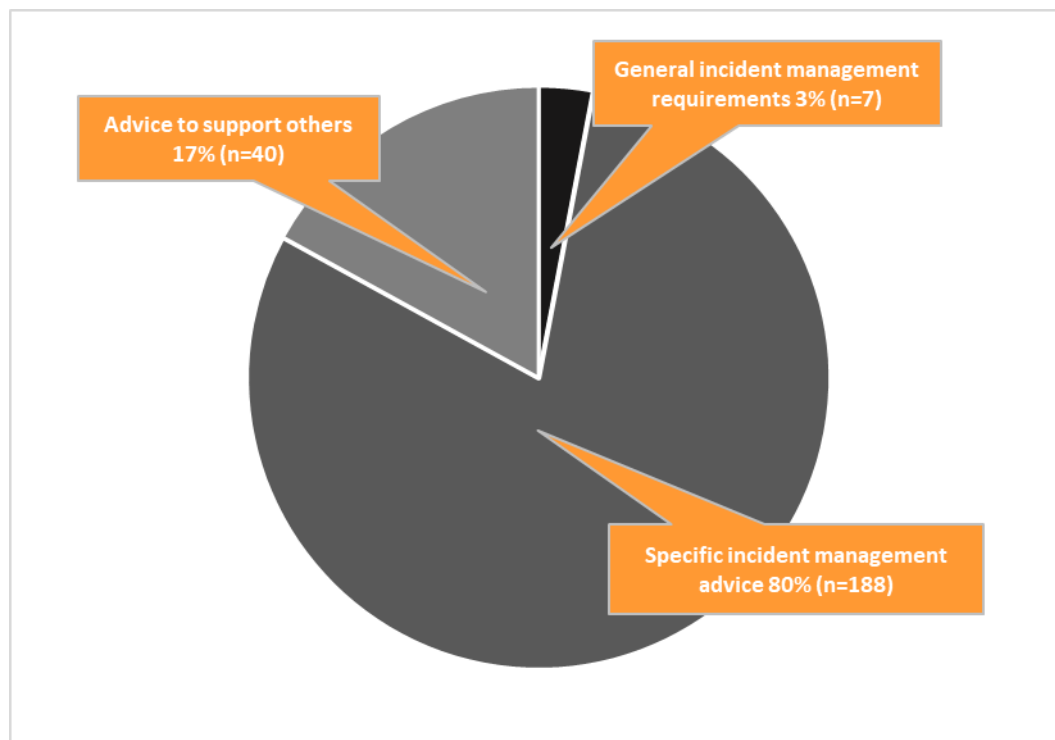
Second, SeMPRO social workers and psychologists amplify the messages in the incident management training with tailored, responsive, and detailed advice as required by command with specific questions or complex needs. Initial responses to disclosures can have lasting positive or negative effects. Case managers work to improve the impacted person's wellbeing by helping others, particularly those in their command chain, to respond sensitively and appropriately. The advice service also seeks to achieve the best outcome for Defence by helping commanders and managers assist their personnel to continue to give, or return to, unrestricted service.

Table 3: Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office new incident management advice clients 2013–14 to 2019–20.

Financial year	Number of SeMPRO advice clients
2013–14	70
2014–15	147
2015–16	131
2016–17	223
2017–18	253
2018–19	266
2019–20	235
Total	1,325

Table 3 illustrates the volume of new SeMPRO clients requesting advice on incident management incrementally increased from 2013–14 to 2018–19. Advice clients composed 40 per cent of all clients in the first year of operation and grew steadily each year to make up 66 per cent of new clients in 2018–19. There was a small decrease in the number of new advice clients in 2019–20 although the proportion of all new clients remained consistent in 2019–20 at 64 percent of new intakes. The shift in client demographics from predominantly support and case management clients to advice clients has expanded the role-specific knowledge and training required by SeMPRO case managers.

Figure 5: Types of advice provided to advice clients in 2019–20.



SeMPRO case managers provide three types of advice to commanders, managers, and other personnel in Defence: general advice, specific incident advice, or support only advice. Figure 5 indicates that 80 per cent of new advice clients in 2019–20 requested help with Defence’s incident management procedures and requirements for a specific reported offence. SeMPRO case managers delivered advice tailored to their individual

needs and circumstances. Clients were provided with strategies to apply person centric and trauma informed care approaches including exploring methods to ensure the impacted person's physical and emotional safety, to consider their wishes, and to promote feelings of control in investigation processes.

Not all advice clients requested assistance with a specific report as commanders or supervisors. Seventeen per cent of advice clients sought guidance to effectively offer support to a friend, colleague, partner, or subordinate who had been directly impacted by sexual misconduct.

2019–20 saw a decrease in client contact soliciting general advice to understand Defence's policies and mandatory reporting requirements, to foster safe working environments, and access to assistance, without the need to apply it to an immediate incident. Personnel seeking general sexual misconduct advice fell to three per cent in 2019–20 from seven per cent in 2018–19.

Debriefing services

SeMPRO case managers provide debriefing services to people who are exposed to sensitive material at work, who support people impacted by sexual misconduct, or who might be impacted by vicarious trauma. Debriefing is designed to prevent psychological injuries arising from workplace exposure to trauma by lessening the likelihood of people experiencing symptoms of trauma and stress. Debriefing clients are personnel who undertake roles as incident managers, work in reporting or investigation areas, provide professional or private support to directly impacted personnel, or are exposed to trauma in other ways. Personnel who have a personal history of trauma, and are exposed to distressing materials and situations, may find debriefing particularly beneficial.

SeMPRO case managers work to improve the mental health of individuals, and prevent vicarious trauma, to preserve their ongoing ability to undertake their duties at full capacity. Clients are guided to identify their own resolutions, and plans for implementing them, to make changes in their workplace, to build stress buffers, and increase resilience. Table 4 indicates fewer new clients accessed debriefing services in 2019–20 than in recent years.

Table 4: Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office new debriefing clients 2013–14 to 2019–20.

Financial year	Number of SeMPRO debriefing clients
2013–14	12
2014–15	10
2015–16	19
2016–17	26
2017–18	22
2018–19	27
2019–20	8
Total	124

Preventing harm through education and training

SeMPRO develops and delivers a suite of education products and packages that are designed to increase positive behaviours, encourage help seeking among impacted personnel, and to improve responses to disclosures. During financial year 2019–20, 19,994 Defence personnel completed SeMPRO education sessions through a mix of face to face and online delivery mediums. This represents a notable increase on the previous year's total of 13,355. Developing e-learning packages has enabled SeMPRO to maximise reach and increase learning opportunities. As at 1 July 2020, approximately 42,000 Defence personnel had a current proficiency after attending a SeMPRO education session.

Sexual misconduct general awareness briefings

Sexual misconduct general awareness briefings aim to give Defence personnel a clear understanding of Defence's behavior expectations and a nuanced understanding of consent as it applies to areas such as technology use and young people. The sessions encourage witnesses to unacceptable behaviours to directly or indirectly intervene, offer suggestions for helping friends who need assistance, and outlines formal support services available to personnel. SeMPRO delivers and facilitates access to sexual misconduct general awareness briefing sessions across Australia by sending experienced facilitators to a range of locations and by training local personnel. Approximately 53 per cent of the permanent ADF holds a current proficiency for completing a SeMPRO education session. During 2019–20 SeMPRO:

- Delivered 24 sexual misconduct general awareness sessions across Australia.
- Facilitated delivery of online sexual misconduct general awareness sessions to nearly 17,000 users.

Command and management workshops

Commanders and managers set the expected behaviour standards in their work environments. Scenario-based workshops teach the incident management processes for criminal and non-criminal sexual misconduct, guide commanders and managers to generate and use strategies for simultaneously promoting capability and wellbeing, and navigate the complexities of incident management in Defence's unique work environments. During 2019–20 SeMPRO:

- Developed a virtual training classroom for interactive delivery to commanders and managers. The virtual training focuses on maintaining the social learning principles that underpin the face to face workshops. Expanding the suite to offer virtual classroom training options has enabled SeMPRO to continue service delivery in the COVID-19 environment and to extend easy access to personnel posted in remote locations and overseas into the future.
- Delivered 22 command and management team training sessions across Australia.

- Designed sexual misconduct incident response workshops tailored for senior non-commissioned officers (SNCOs). These workshops focus on understanding the role SNCOs have in reported sexual misconduct incidents and developing skills for using a trauma informed approach with the personnel involved.

Tailored education packages

Tailored packages are provided to Defence personnel with specific roles and obligations in responding to sexual misconduct. During 2019–20 SeMPRO:

- Delivered training to new Australian Defence Force chaplains on their initial employment training courses. These sessions help chaplains to deepen their understanding of sexual misconduct response in Defence as they enter the organisation.
- Delivered training to Officers and Instructors of Australian Navy Cadets (ANC). The ANC sessions focus on mandatory reporting requirements and effectively helping young people in their care.

SeMPRO Educator Network

The SeMPRO Educator Network (SEN) is a community of Defence employees around Australia who deliver sexual misconduct general awareness briefings to their peers, units, ships, bases, and in their regions. SEN members increase the reach of Defence's messaging on sexual misconduct and provide additional resourcing for commanders and managers to engage their personnel on topics tied to desirable behaviours, sexual ethics, and bystander actions. During 2019–20 SeMPRO:

- Trained 17 new SEN volunteers to form a network of 78 personnel across Defence.
- Coordinated SEN members to deliver 61 sexual misconduct general awareness briefs and training to the Defence International Training Centre.

Looking to 2020-21

The SeMPRO team continues to develop and deliver tailored education packages to create workplace climates which foster Defence values and One Defence behaviours. SeMPRO is committed to increasing its reach, quality of care, and impact on Defence culture by applying evidence-based design and delivery across its portfolio of services.

Virtual education delivery that is interactive, and facilitates quick access for remote units while maintaining the social learning environment, is critical for skills development. SeMPRO's targeted initiatives for the next financial year are to further enhance education products in virtual classrooms for commanders and managers; and to commence implementing training specifically targeted to SNCOs, who are often the people receiving an initial disclosure or report. Equipping these personnel to respond using a trauma informed approach is significant for improving the outcomes of impacted individuals.

Definitions

What is sexual misconduct?

Sexual misconduct is a term used to describe sexual offences, sexual harassment, and sexual discrimination. Sexual offences are crimes as defined in Commonwealth, State, and Territory legislation. Specific offences differ across Australian states and territories but most offences fall into the categories of non-penetrative sexual offences, penetrative sexual offences, and aggravated penetrative sexual offences. Sexual harassment occurs when a person makes unwelcome sexual advances, requests sexual favours, or engages in other unwelcome sexualised conduct, in circumstances reasonably anticipated to offend, humiliate, or intimidate. Sexual harassment is criminalised in the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*. Sexual discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person, in the same or similar circumstances, because of that person's sex, characteristics of that person's sex, or assumed characteristics of that person's sex. *The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)* contains a detailed definition. *The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)* also criminalises discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, marital or relationship status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, and breastfeeding or family responsibilities.

Disclosures and reports

The term 'disclosure' means to tell another person about a sexual misconduct incident. Disclosure often means revealing that information to a friend, family member, or healthcare professional. Reporting means to advise someone with the authority or obligation to action information about a sexual misconduct incident. Reporting, in Defence, means advising the Joint Military Police Unit, civilian police, or a commander or manager.

Restricted Disclosures

Defence provides multiple avenues for confidential medical, psychological, and support services for personnel impacted by sexual misconduct without making a report, after reporting but choosing not to pursue an investigation, or throughout policing and legal proceedings. Personnel are able to self-refer to medical officers, psychologists, chaplains, and social workers in Defence. Confidential access to those services is not shared with command teams without the client's consent. SeMPRO case managers provide the same confidential service to all clients regardless of whether they chose to make a report to Defence or to civilian police. Clients who use SeMPRO's support and case management services without making a report have made a Restricted Disclosure. Clients may choose to use SeMPRO services anonymously if they would prefer to do so.

Personnel impacted by sexual misconduct are able to make incident reports to Defence or to civilian police at any time. The SeMPRO case managers' services are available to aid clients to assess their options in the military or civilian legal systems. SeMPRO clients who make a report to Defence or to the civilian police have made an Unrestricted Report.

The wishes of personnel who choose not to report sexual misconduct, or to have an incident investigated, are respected. SeMPRO, and the Joint Military Police Unit, explain options and potential benefits to making a statement but do not pressure personnel subjected to sexual misconduct into reporting or an investigation if they do not want to. SeMPRO avoids using terms such as 'converted' to describe a person who accessed healthcare services without reporting and later makes a report.