



Australian Government
Department of Defence



Sexual Misconduct Prevention
and Response Office

Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office

SeMPRO Annual Report FY 2018–19

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Victim focused – from care to recovery



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Foreword

The SeMPRO Annual Report summarises the services provided SeMPRO to Defence personnel in 2018–19.

SeMPRO is a dedicated service that supports and provides case management to personnel directly impacted by sexual misconduct, assists commanders and managers with incident management advice, debriefs personnel working in sensitive areas, and develops and delivers education products on sexual misconduct prevention and management.

2018–19 in review

The 2018–19 financial year saw SeMPRO improve pathways for people to access support services and refine its current suite of products to amplify its customer focus, accessibility, and visibility in Defence.

Key achievements include:

- Releasing the updated policy for reporting and managing sexual misconduct. The policy changes improve information accessibility and aid commanders and managers to apply Defence's sexual misconduct incident management requirements to promote wellbeing and capability.
- Refining the training package offered to commanders and managers to strengthen sexual misconduct incident management skills and to enhance Defence's unified approach to managing reported incidents.
- Developing and releasing an online version of the sexual misconduct general awareness training to increase the reach of Defence's sexual misconduct messaging.

Living Defence values, minimising harm, and promoting access

Since its inception in 2013, SeMPRO has directly assisted 1,872¹ 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.

¹ 1 July 2013 to June 30 2019.

Our approach

Trauma informed care and person centricity

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.



The trauma informed care approach used in SeMPRO works with the principles of safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment to increase the wellbeing of personnel who have been impacted by sexual misconduct³. Person centricity means focusing on the needs and wishes of the impacted person, aids clients to direct their own recovery, and to feel safe and in control. Defence applies those principles 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. Person centricity creates opportunities for individuals to rebuild their sense of control and empowerment. The approach maintains Defence's capability through its personnel.

Tailored, responsive, and appropriate services

How we directly assist Defence personnel

- **Victim services 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. These clients are described as victim services clients throughout this report.
- **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 provide strategies and advice for applying Defence's policies and requirements to increase the wellbeing of all personnel and to achieve the best outcomes for Defence's capability. These clients are referred to as advice clients throughout this report.
- **Debriefing clients:** Case managers provide debriefing and mental health support services to personnel exposed to difficult material at work and to friends, partners, family, and colleagues of personnel impacted by sexual misconduct. The purpose of debriefing is to

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

³ Kezelman C & Stavropoulos P 2012. 'The last frontier'. Practice guidelines for treatment of complex trauma informed care and service delivery. Kirribilli, NSW: Adults Surviving Child Abuse.

prevent potential psychological injuries that might arise from indirect exposure to trauma and to maintain clients' emotional capacity to aid them to continue supporting others. These clients are called debriefing clients throughout this report.

The number of SeMPRO's clients, overall, decreased slightly between 2017–18 and 2018–19. The volume of victim services clients also decreased from 32 per cent of clients in 2017–18 to 27 per cent of clients in 2018–19. More commanders, managers, and other personnel sought strategies and advice for managing sexual misconduct incidents than in any previous years of operation. Advice clients comprised 66 per cent of SeMPRO's clients in 2018–19.

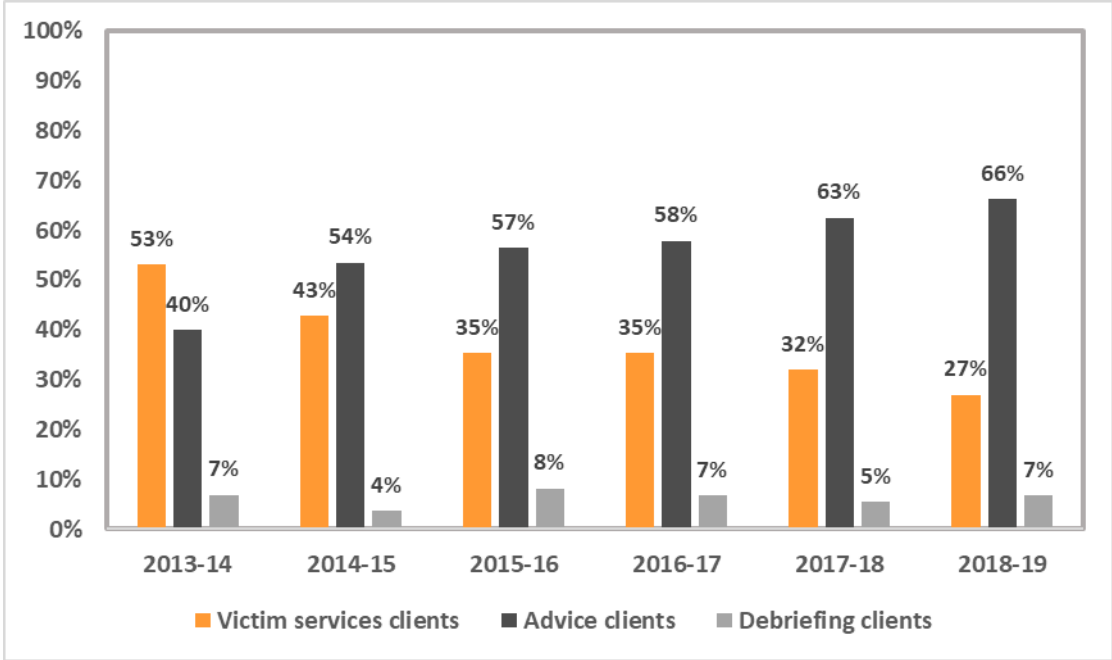
The advice SeMPRO provides to personnel ensures they respond appropriately to people directly impacted by sexual misconduct to support their wellbeing and enable their ongoing contributions to Defence's capability. Effective personnel support and incident management fosters cultural change by cultivating workplaces where reporting and help seeking are encouraged and accessible.

Table 1. Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office new clients from 2013–2019⁴.

Financial year	Victim services clients	Advice clients	Debriefing clients	Total
2013–14	93	70	12	175
2014–15	118	147	10	275
2015–16	82	131	19	232
2016–17	136	223	26	385
2017–18	130	253	22	405
2018–19	108	265	27	400
Total	667	1,089	116	1,872

⁴ The data in Table 1 is data collected during service provision and is subject to change as clients reveal additional information. The figure previously reported for victim services clients for 2017–18 was 126. The figure previously printed for the number of advice clients in 2017–18 was 255. The total number of new clients in 2017–18 was previously reported as 403.

Figure 1: Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office new clients from 2013–2019 by client type.



Support and case management

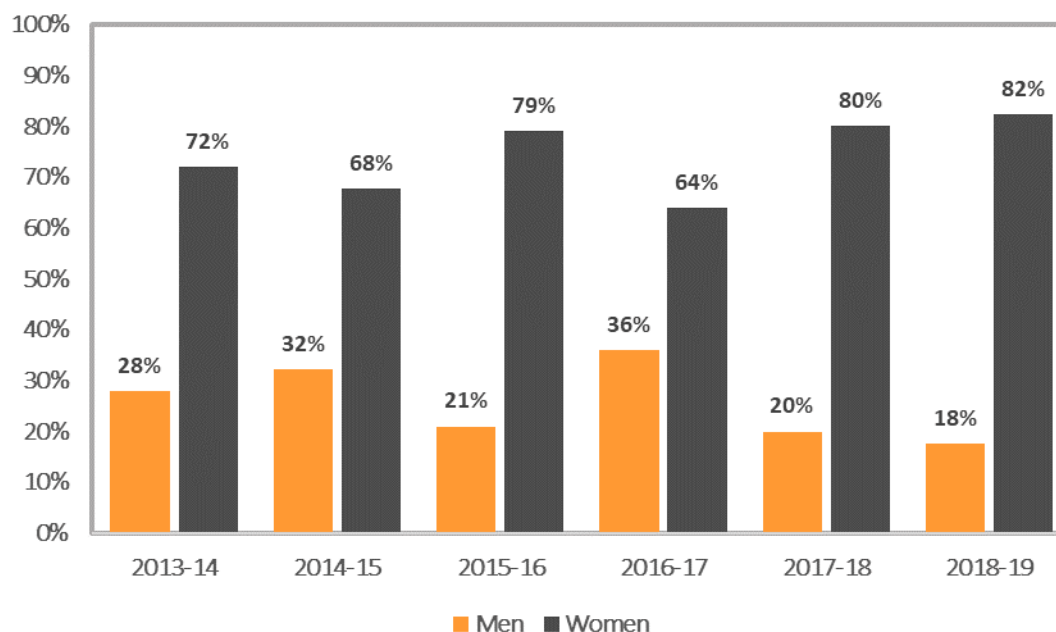
SeMPRO psychologists and social workers provide confidential support and case management services to clients directly impacted by sexual misconduct in Defence. Establishing physical and psychological safety can be challenging for current serving Defence members. Case managers help Defence members to navigate their immediate options around work and accommodation where the perpetrator may also live and work.

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 support capability.

The gender balance

SeMPRO provides services to all Defence personnel impacted by sexual misconduct. The challenge for SeMPRO is making services accessible to everybody.

Figure 2: SeMPRO victim services clients by gender 2013–2019.



Women have made up almost three-quarters of SeMPRO's victim services clients since 2013–14. Figure 2 shows that SeMPRO case managers assisted more men in some previous years than might be expected from formal reporting to Defence. The volume of victim services clients who were men fell in 2017–18 and again in 2018–19.

Talking about sexual misconduct is complicated in Defence. Defence attracts and retains women although the majority of the Defence population is male. As at 30 June 2019 females were 18.6 per cent of the permanent Defence members. Sexual offences are gendered crimes in Australia. Most of the victims in sexual misconduct incidents are women⁵ and most of the perpetrators are men⁶. Approximately 95 per cent of perpetrators identified in the incidents reported to Defence, between 2013–14 and 2017–18, were men. Women were victims in more than 80 per cent of those reported incidents⁷. Increasing the accessibility of sexual misconduct support services to women and to men poses different challenges. The evidence available from Defence-wide incident reporting and from SeMPRO client data suggest that reporting and help seeking behaviours differ for men and women. The trend over the last four years towards SeMPRO victim services clients seeking assistance earlier has been driven by female clients.

⁵ 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 victims in 83 per cent of the self-reported sexual assaults in the 12 period prior to completing the survey.

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2018. Recorded crime – offenders, 2016–17. ABS cat. No. 4519.0. Canberra, ABS. Recorded crime – offenders, 2016–17 indicates that 94 per cent of offenders in recorded sexual assaults and related offences were men.

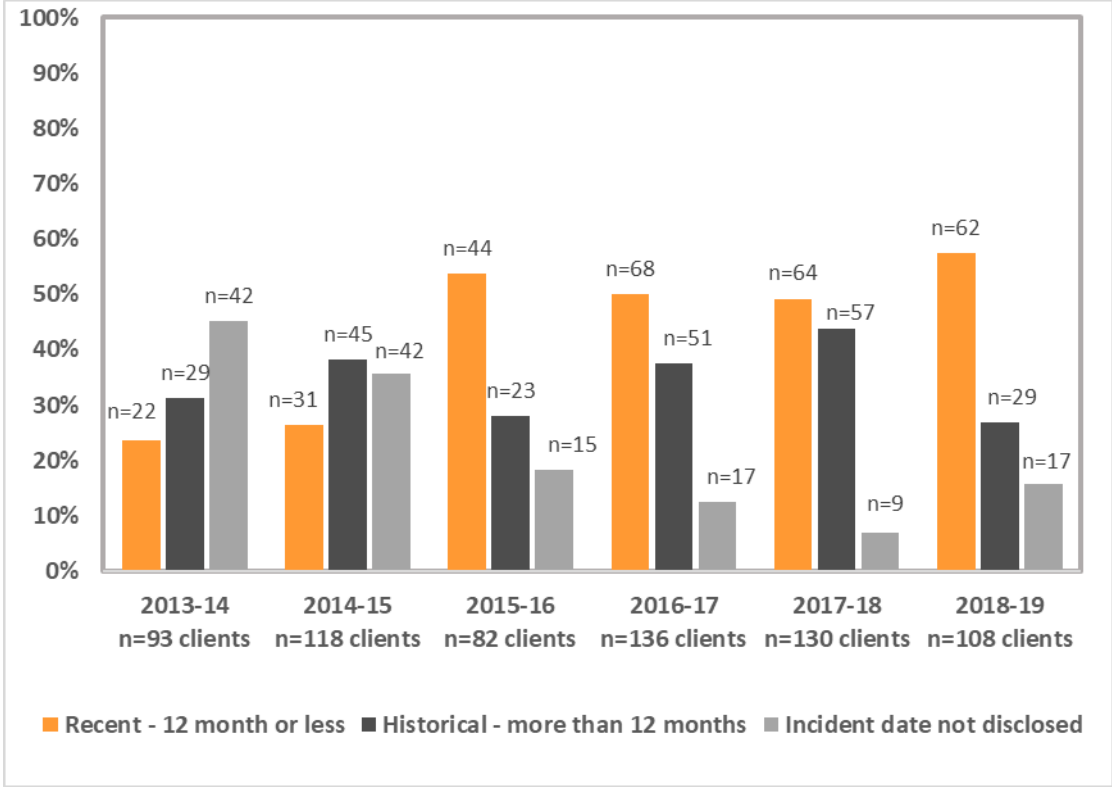
⁷ Department of Defence unpublished raw data 2013-2018. Raw Defence incident reporting and military policing data indicate that men were identified as the persons of interest 94.7 per cent of reported incidents, where a person of interest was identified. The same data show that women were identified as the victims of the reported sexual misconduct incidents in 81.8 per cent of incidents where a victim was identified.

When people seek support

Around one quarter of the victim services clients in SeMPRO’s first two years of operation, from 2013–2015, sought assistance with an incident that occurred within the previous 12 months. More than half of new victim services clients from 2015–16 onwards, in contrast, contacted SeMPRO within a year of being subjected to a sexual misconduct incident. Figure 3 illustrates the shift from historical to move recent incidents across SeMPRO’s victim services clients.

The clients subjected to recent sexual misconduct incidents more often seek system navigation assistance and referrals for their next steps as well as needing support. Policing, legal, and other government-provided services for sexual offences operate under legal frameworks that vary across Australian states and territories with different supporting regulations, funding arrangements, and eligibility requirements. Case managers assist clients to identify, navigate, and access relevant services in their local area.

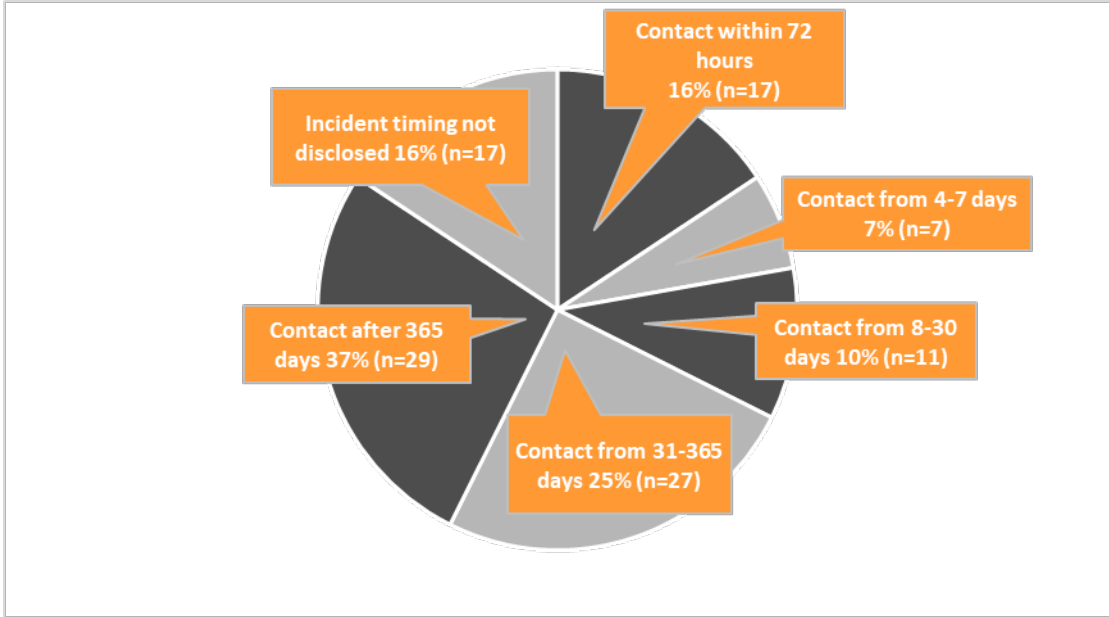
Figure 3: SeMPRO victim services clients’ recent and historical experiences 2013–2019.



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 victim services clients from 2015–16 onwards requested assistance with a recent incident whereas that figure was 32 per cent for male SeMPRO victim services clients.

SeMPRO case managers can assist clients with access 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 need them. Figure 4 indicates that victim services 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, 2018–19.



Incident management advice

One of SeMPRO’s core roles is to guide Defence personnel to manage sexual misconduct incidents promptly and sensitively. SeMPRO works to cultivate work environments that encourage reporting and help seeking behaviour in two ways. SeMPRO delivers sexual misconduct incident management workshops to command teams across Defence. The workshops are 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 SeMPRO case management team also provides one on one policy information and support guidance directly to advice clients who have specific questions and complex needs.

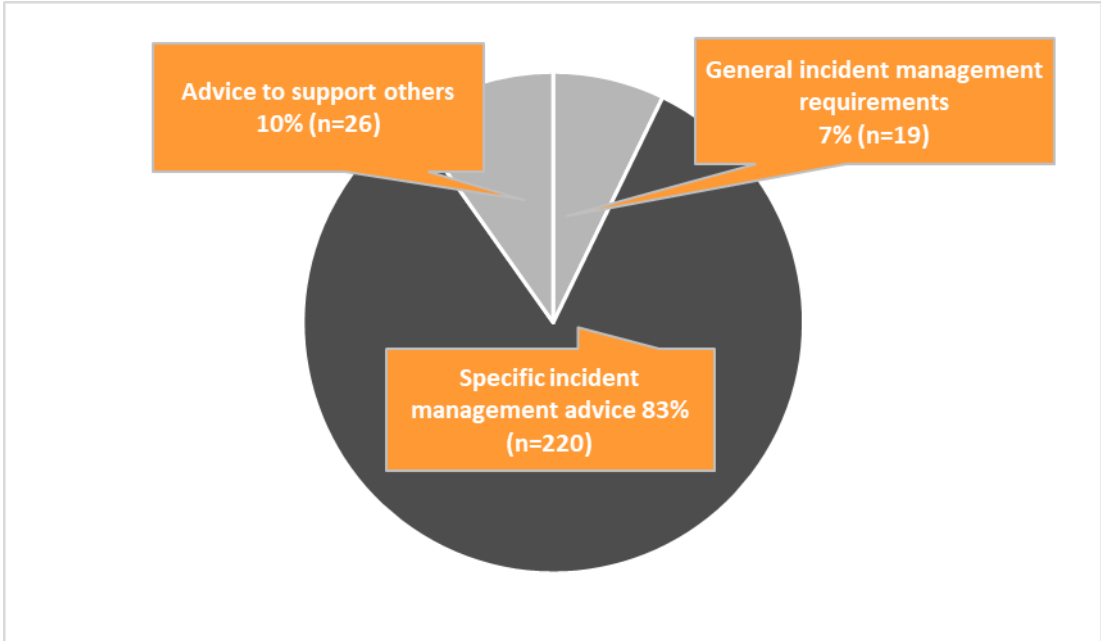
The sexual misconduct incident reporting and management environment in Defence is complex. Personnel have access to multiple avenues within the military and civilian justice systems and to Defence and community-based health and support services. Case managers work to improve the person’s wellbeing by helping others to respond sensitively and appropriately. Case managers also work to obtain the best outcome for Defence by helping personnel to adhere to the rules for incident management and by assisting victim services clients to continue to give, or return to, unrestricted service. Advice clients receive assistance with systems navigation to aid them to best fulfil their duty of care needs and specific strategies that build on their skills to support personnel through difficult processes.

Table 2: Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office new incident management advice clients 2013–14 to 2018–2019.

Financial year	Number of SeMPRO advice clients
2013–14	70
2014–15	147
2015–16	131
2016–17	223
2017–18	253
2018–19	265
Total	1,089

The volume of SeMPRO clients requesting advice and assistance on incident management has increased steadily since 2013. Advice clients composed 34 per cent of all clients in the first year of operation and grew steadily each year to make up 64 per cent of new clients in 2018–19. The shift in client demographics from predominantly victim services clients to advice clients has expanded the role-specific knowledge and training required by SeMPRO case managers.

Figure 5: Types of assistance provided to advice clients in 2018–19.



SeMPRO case managers provided three types of advice to commanders, managers, and other personnel in Defence. Over 80 per cent of SeMPRO’s advice clients requested help with Defence’s incident management procedures and requirements for a specific reported offence. Case managers delivered advice for adhering to incident management obligations alongside recommendations for improving the wellbeing of the personnel involved. Case managers helped commanders and managers to apply person centricity and trauma informed care principles in incident management 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.

Seven per cent of advice clients in 2018–19 solicited assistance 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.

Not all advice clients sought assistance with incident management as commanders or supervisors. Ten per cent of advice clients needed assistance to effectively support to a friend, colleague, partner, or subordinate who had been directly impacted by sexual misconduct.

Debriefing services

SeMPRO case managers provide debriefing services to people who are exposed to sensitive material, who support people impacted by sexual misconduct, or who might be impacted by vicarious trauma. Debriefing aims to lessen 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 wellbeing of the individual, and to preserve their ongoing ability to undertake their duties at full capacity, by aiming to prevent vicarious trauma. Clients are guided to identify their own resolutions, and strategies for implementing them, to make changes in their workplace, to build stress buffers, and increase resilience.

Table 3: Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office new debriefing clients 2013–14 to 2018–19.

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
Total	116

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. As at 1 July, 41,933 Defence personnel held a current proficiency for attending a SeMPRO education session.

Sexual misconduct general awareness briefings

The sexual misconduct general awareness presentation promotes understanding consent and technology, encourages witnesses to unacceptable behaviours to directly or indirectly intervene, offers suggestions for helping friends who need support, 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. During 2018-19 SeMPRO:

- Refined the core sexual misconduct general awareness briefing. The face to face content was refreshed and an e-learning version of the material was created and implemented to increase accessibility for reservists and other personnel in remote locations or unable to get to a face to face briefing.
- Delivered 52 face to face sexual misconduct general awareness sessions across Australia.
- Delivered online sexual misconduct general awareness sessions to more than 5,000 users.

Command and management training

Commanders and managers set the expected behaviour standards in their unit. The scenario-based workshop teaches the incident management processes for criminal and non-criminal sexual misconduct, guides commanders and managers to generate and use strategies for simultaneously promoting capability and wellbeing, and to adapt to the complexities of incident management in Defence's unique work environments. During 2018-19 SeMPRO:

- Redeveloped the training delivered to commanders and managers. The workshop focuses on personnel management aspects of sexual misconduct incident reports, policy application, and on increasing participants' skills.
- Delivered 26 command and management team training sessions across Australia.

Tailored education packages

Tailored packages are provided to Defence personnel with specific roles and obligations in responding to sexual misconduct. SeMPRO delivers professional development and specialised training for Joint Military Police Unit personnel who undertake sexual offence investigations, to Australian Defence Force chaplains, and to Defence personnel in youth facing positions. During 2018-19 SeMPRO:

- Delivered training to 19 new chaplains on their initial employment training.
- Participated in panel discussions for personnel in youth facing positions and contributed to the Defence's youth safety policy environment.

SeMPRO Educator Network (SEN)

The SEN is a community of Defence employees around Australia who deliver sexual misconduct general awareness briefings to their peers, units, ships, across their 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 2018-19 SeMPRO:

- trained 11 new SEN volunteers in 2018-19 to form a network of 82 volunteers across Defence; and
- supported SEN members to deliver 98 sexual misconduct general awareness briefs.

Looking to 2019–20

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. SeMPRO worked with veterans' organisations in the community, and with the Defence Force Ombudsman, to facilitate service access to serving and ex-serving members in 2018–19. In 2019–20 SeMPRO will focus communications on other parts of the Defence population that are harder to reach to increase accessibility of its services. Our focus for the next financial year in our prevention and education work is to continue refining our products and services, to best meet the needs of Defence, and to develop new and innovative ways to better support personnel.

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 assist 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.

