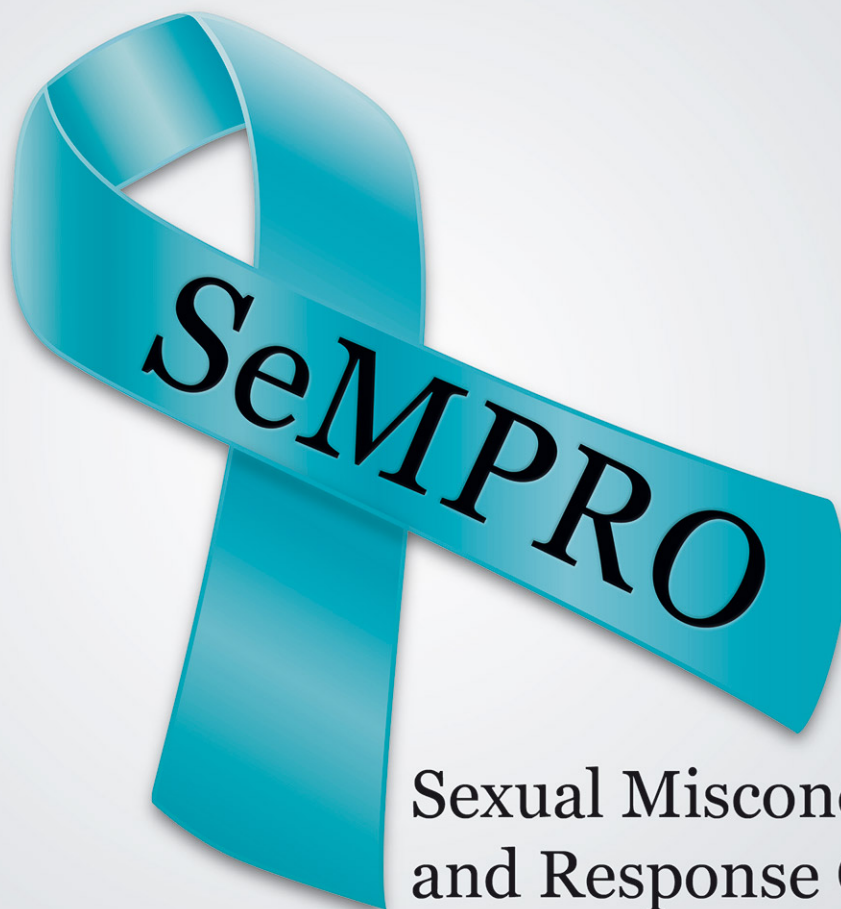




Australian Government
Defence



**Sexual Misconduct Prevention
and Response Office**

Annual Report **2021–22**



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¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C1968A00063>

² <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2021C00127>

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A03712>

⁴ <http://drnet/AssociateSecretary/security/policy/Pages/dspf.aspx>

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Executive Summary

The overarching mission of the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office (SeMPRO) is to support individuals who are impacted by sexual misconduct, and to prevent sexual misconduct in Defence workplaces. SeMPRO does this by employing a person-centric and trauma-informed approach to all aspects of its work through various lines of effort.

Critically, immediate support for persons in need is provided 24/7 through the 1800 SeMPRO Service.

In 2021-22, 1800 SeMPRO saw a continued increase in demand from clients impacted by sexual misconduct, a trend that started with the advent of COVID pandemic in late 2019. The increase in client contacts compared with pre-COVID data is consistent with increased demand for support services available to the general population during the pandemic. In Defence this increase may be attributed to factors including changes in living and work arrangements on Defence bases, concerted efforts to educate Defence personnel about behavioural standards and support options, as well as a broader public discourse destigmatising help-seeking.

SeMPRO's tailored education initiatives are aimed at prevention and better management of sexual misconduct behaviours in Defence. Primarily, this is achieved through the evolution and delivery of SeMPRO's comprehensive training packages for Defence commanders and personnel. At the conclusion of the reporting period, more than one third of Defence personnel were proficient in at least once of SeMPRO's education products; this represents increased voluntary engagement on previous years. Engagement with SeMPRO education products reflects a commitment by Defence personnel to prevent and address sexual misconduct in the workplace and results in more Defence personnel who are appropriately prepared to respond to and support an impacted person who may disclose to them. It is indicative of positive cultural reform in the organisation.

Further to this end, 2021-22 saw a wholesale review of SeMPRO education products. This review led to an initiative for the development of a new education continuum designed to provide mandatory foundational knowledge for all Defence personnel. The review identified opportunities to incorporate changing community standards about sexual misconduct and consent laws, reaffirm Defence's behavioural expectations, encourage impacted people to seek help, and teach response and incident management skills.

In 2021-22 SeMPRO also updated the central policy for managing sexual misconduct in Defence, designed and produced an interactive sexual misconduct client support portal, and provided subject matter expertise to Defence policy makers and committees.

Over 2021-22 these initiatives supported an improved approach to the management and response of sexual misconduct in Defence.

SeMPRO 2021–2022 in brief

The overarching intent of the Department of Defence’s Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office (SeMPRO) is to help people who are impacted by sexual misconduct and prevent sexual misconduct in Defence workplaces. SeMPRO works in three key ways to do this, by:

- providing education and training about sexual misconduct to Defence personnel;
- providing client support to people affected by sexual misconduct; and
- shaping Defence policy to provide accessible resources that aid those impacted by sexual misconduct, their supporters, and managers.

During 2021–22, the 1800 SeMPRO Service helped 440 clients. This was a similar number overall to the prior 2020–21 year. Within this pool of 440 clients, however, more people contacted SeMPRO about their own experience of sexual misconduct and fewer people contacted SeMPRO for advice in incident response and management than in the previous year. One fifth of Defence personnel undertook SeMPRO training on sexual misconduct during 2021–22. Currently one third of Defence personnel are proficient in one or more of SeMPRO’s education products.

Immediate help – 1800 SeMPRO

What happens when you phone 1800 SeMPRO for help?

You can call any time. Or text if you prefer. Over the weekend. At 2am. From overseas. We are a team of psychologists and social workers available at all hours.

The first thing is to find out how you’d like us to help. Some callers need to tell their story - to be heard. Others need to find out about services in their area or ways to get through a rough patch. We give you a person-centred response which means that, wherever you are up to in responding to what happened, this is where we start too. If you don’t feel like talking, we won’t make you. Our service is confidential. You don’t need to share your name if you don’t want to.

SeMPRO social workers and psychologists will tell you about how SeMPRO works, check in on your personal safety and wellbeing, and discuss options with you to move forward. The service you receive is guided by your needs.

For the third consecutive year, the 1800 SeMPRO Service saw an increase in client demand from those directly impacted by sexual misconduct. Twice as many clients, who experienced sexual misconduct, contacted SeMPRO in 2021–22 than before the COVID-19 pandemic began in late 2019. The majority of these (60%) were women disclosing incidents of sexual assault or attempted sexual assault. The increased demand seen in Support clients has taken place in the context of continued elevated call rates to national Australian call centre services such as Lifeline, Beyond Blue, and 1800 Respect.

The 1800 SeMPRO team also provides advice to those individuals around an impacted person to help them provide support to a friend or colleague, or manage an incident well. The Client Response Team helped 216 commanders, managers, colleagues, friends, and family members give their best response to a person impacted by sexual misconduct in 2021–22.

What happens when you phone for advice?

Managing sexual misconduct incidents can be hard. Knowing what to say to a friend who has disclosed to you is not always easy. Helping a team member to feel safe and navigate their options can be complicated.

1800 SeMPRO is a service Defence provides to help you respond to a person who has been impacted by sexual misconduct in the best way you can. We can help you with strategies for assisting a friend or family member who has come to you for support. We can also help you as a decision maker to understand Defence's policies and support services and to apply them in difficult situations.

Educating Defence

SeMPRO sexual misconduct education provides a suite of products that reaffirm Defence's behaviour expectations, encourage impacted people to seek help, and teach response and incident management skills. SeMPRO education products aim to standardise understanding about sexual misconduct behaviours across the enterprise and reduce the impact sexual misconduct has on personnel. One fifth of Defence (23,530 personnel) completed a SeMPRO training course in 2021–22 and 45,355 (37% of all Defence) held a current proficiency in one or more SeMPRO training courses.

SeMPRO reviewed its education products in 2021–22. A new suite of products are planned as an integrated set of modules that build on people's experiences as they progress through their Defence career. The education continuum will provide foundation knowledge for all Defence members that complements the targeted education workshops for command, management, and specialist roles. In 2021–22, the Defence People Committee directed for five sexual misconduct modules to become part of Defence mandatory training from 2023.

Policy and subject matter expertise

Appropriate, current, and informed policy about sexual misconduct is the foundation that Defence personnel rely upon to respond to incidents of sexual misconduct. SeMPRO team members have developed a unique body of expertise and experience to assist with the issue of sexual misconduct in the workplace. In 2021–22, SeMPRO progressed Defence's strategic objectives through:

- Updating the central policy for managing sexual misconduct in Defence;
- Producing an interactive web-based information tool for navigating the reporting and investigation processes and outlining all of the health and other support services in Defence including their access channels and eligibility; and
- Providing subject matter expertise to Defence policy makers and committees.

SeMPRO also provided advice and assistance to external organisations on policy, current good practice in service provision, and education product design.

Introduction

Sexual misconduct incidents are unwelcome and unwanted sexualised behaviours and sexual offences. These behaviours are contrary to Defence and community values. Defence continues to pursue best practice in sexual misconduct prevention, incident management, and personnel response. The Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office (SeMPRO) is a central resource in Defence's sexual misconduct cultural change initiatives.

SeMPRO works within the Defence Transformation Strategy and directly contributes to promoting Defence values and behaviours to Defence personnel.

“The enterprise-wide approach that will empower our people to be the agile, adaptive and ethical workforce that we require to face the future. The continuous improvement culture will be achieved through embedding strong Defence values and behaviours, clear accountabilities and informed and evidence-based decision-making.” (Defence Transformation Strategy, p. 21)

SeMPRO aims to give all personnel a clear understanding of Defence's behaviour expectations, and seeks to reduce the impact of sexual misconduct, by:

- directly supporting impacted people through the 1800 SeMPRO Service,
- training others to respond well to reports and disclosures,
- enhancing the skills and ability of leaders, commanders, and managers to speak about sexual misconduct prevention and respond in a trauma-informed way, and by
- shaping policy and providing implementation tools to Defence.

The SeMPRO Annual Report summarises the services and projects that SeMPRO delivered to Defence personnel. The 2021-22 Annual Report presents the team's work in three sections:

- Immediate Help – 1800 SeMPRO,
- Educating Defence, and
- Policy and Expertise for Defence.

Detailed information about key concepts used in this report, and core principles used in SeMPRO operations, is provided in the Appendices.

Immediate Help – 1800 SeMPRO

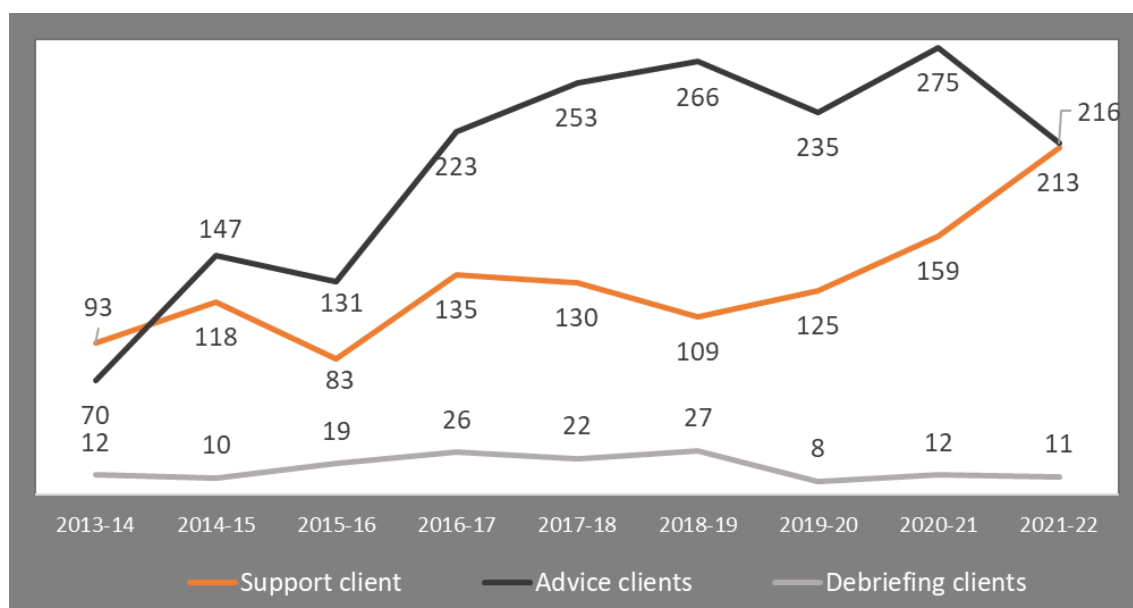
The 1800 SeMPRO Service is available to all people impacted in some way by sexual misconduct in Defence. This includes any current or ex-serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members, Defence Australian Public Service (APS) employees, Defence contractors, ADF Cadets, as well as managers, friends and family members.

Eligible clients can contact the service 24/7, any day of the year, and speak with a psychologist or social worker. The after hours service provides for acute needs and advice regarding issues that emerge outside normal business hours and to those working overseas.

Clients of the service have a diverse range of needs. Key reasons for calling 1800 SeMPRO include: support for themselves in response to their experience of sexual misconduct; advice on how to support someone else as a friend or as a manager; and, more general emotional health concerns not directly related to a specific incident of sexual misconduct. These three groups of clients, and the way SeMPRO assists them, are described in detail in this section of the report.

A similar number of clients accessed the 1800 SeMPRO Service between 2020–21 and 2021–22. The apparent stability was due to an increase in Support clients and a decrease in Advice clients (refer Figure 1). Support client numbers have seen a steady increase since 2018–19.

Figure 1: New clients from 2013–2022 by client type



The data in Figure 1 show that Support clients have increased over the prior four years, from 109 clients in 2018–19 to 214 new Support clients in 2021–22. The increase in Support clients runs counter to a drop in Advice clients from last year, from 275 new Advice clients in 2020–21 to 216 in 2021–22.

The increased demand seen in Support clients has taken place in the context of continued elevated call rates to national Australian call centre services, such as Lifeline and Beyond Blue.⁵ Nationally, the elevated call rates are due in large part to the psychological distress from the 2019 bushfires, flooding during 2021–22, and the ongoing impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic⁶.

1. Support clients – assistance to people directly impacted by sexual misconduct

The 1800 SeMPRO Service is staffed by a team of social workers and psychologists. It was established to assist Defence personnel directly impacted by sexual misconduct. The primary objective of the service is, as much as possible, to reduce harm from sexual misconduct and to improve the wellbeing of those who are directly exposed to it. These people are *Support clients*.

SeMPRO social workers and psychologists provide individuals with immediate support, they facilitate access to resources, assist in navigating the Defence complaints mechanisms, and offer referrals for other resources. The 1800 SeMPRO team, also known as SeMPRO's Client Response Team, works to promote wellbeing, enhance resilience, and facilitate the development of self-management strategies and skills. Since 2013, the team has assisted 1,164 Support clients.

Defence encourages reporting of sexual misconduct incidents, and there are multiple avenues to do so. SeMPRO aids clients who wish to make a report to select the avenue that is right for them, but SeMPRO is a *supporting* not a *reporting* organisation. SeMPRO does not take reports of sexual misconduct and cannot instigate an investigation.

The majority of incidents disclosed by Support clients in 2021–22 were sexual assaults rather than other types of sexual misconduct (60 per cent of Support clients or 128 people disclosed sexual assault, Figure 2). This continues a long term trend in the type of incidents experienced by Support clients.⁷ Other types of sexual misconduct are known to be more common than sexual assault.⁸ These data illustrate that the 1800 SeMPRO Service is utilised primarily by people who had experiences at the criminal end of the sexual misconduct continuum. Advice and support about other types of sexual harassment is likely to be sought through other channels, such as friends at work, an immediate supervisor or commander, or non-military friends or family. Advice services such as 1800DEFENCE, the Employee Assistance Program, SeMPRO, or the Army Fair Go Hotline, were rarely contacted for matters of sexual harassment.⁹

⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022). Mental health services in Australia. Lifeline and Beyond Blue <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/mental-health-services/mental-health-services-in-australia/report-contents/mental-health-impact-of-covid-19> accessed 20 September 2022

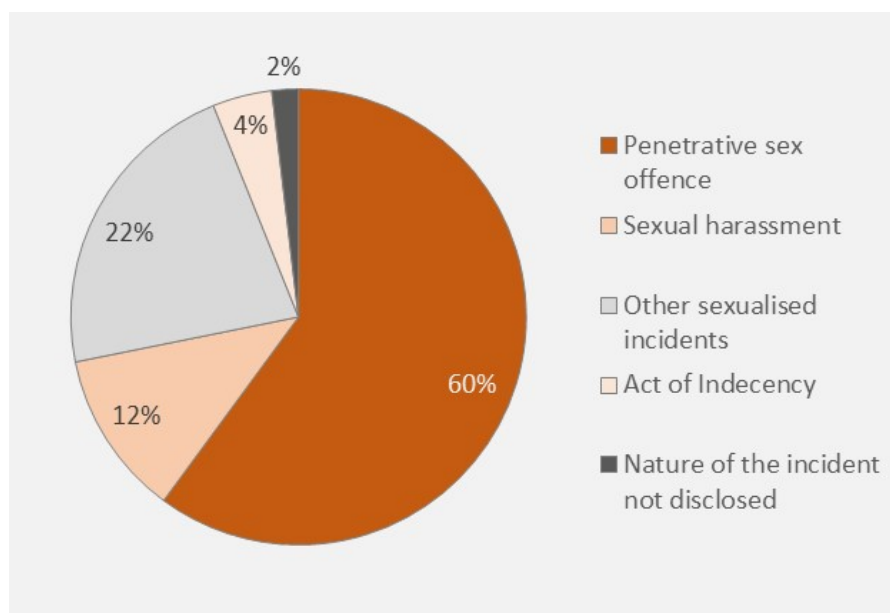
⁶ Arjmand H-A, Seabrook E, Bakker D, & Rickard N. (2021) Mental health consequences of adversity in Australia: National Bushfires associated with increased depressive symptoms while COVID-19 pandemic associated with increased anxiety. *Frontiers in Psychology*.

⁷ Other call centres are also experiencing increased call volume with regards to domestic violence and sexual assault, for example 1800Respect.

⁸ In Australian workplaces, 33% of people have experienced sexual harassment in the prior five years, (AHRC 2020 Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report, page 96) and 1% had experienced sexual assault or attempted sexual assault (AHRC 2018 Everyone's Business report, page 40).

In Defence, sexual harassment occurs 20 times more often than sexual assault, <1% compared to 4% (Defence workplace behaviours survey data 2021).

⁹ In responses to the 2021 Defence workplace behaviours survey, participants who experienced sexual misconduct contacted, on average, three different sources for advice. These sources were most often: work colleagues or friends at work, the immediate commander or supervisor, someone else in the chain of command, and non-military friends or family (Defence workplace behaviours survey data 2021).

Figure 2: Types of misconduct disclosed by Support clients in 2021–22

The data in Figure 2 show that 60 per cent of new Support clients disclosed sexual assaults, 12 per cent disclosed sexual harassment, four per cent disclosed acts of indecency, and 22 per cent disclosed other sexualised incidents.

When people seek support – recent and less recent incidents

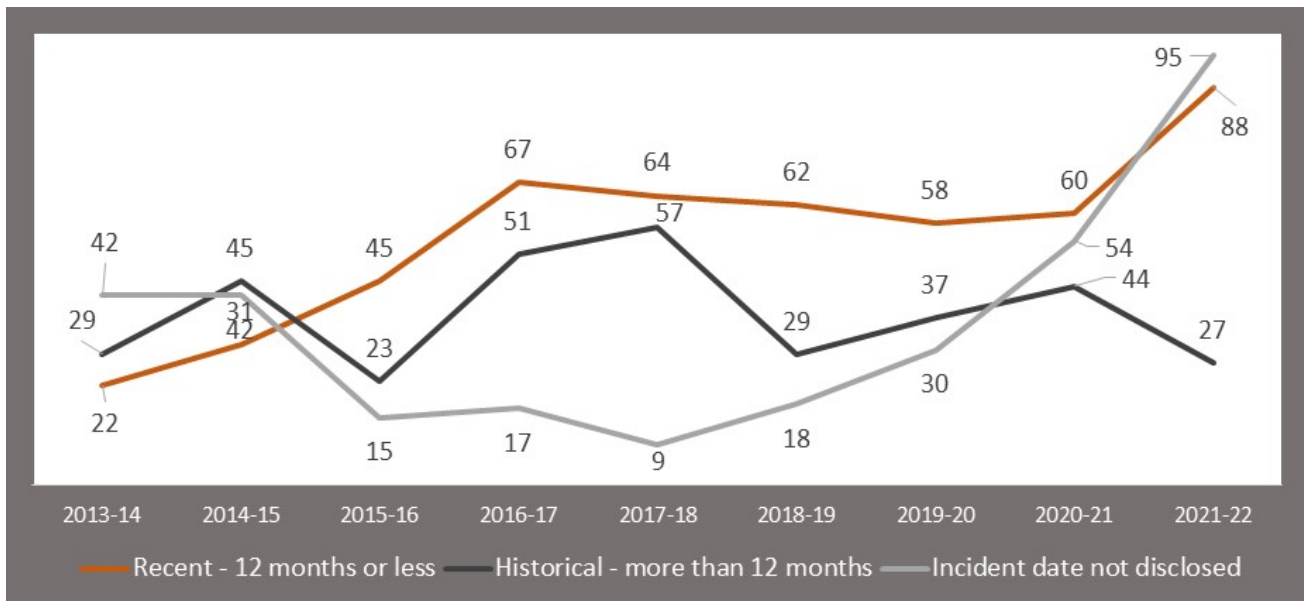
Support clients differ according to their personal circumstances, the incident circumstances, and the time elapsed between being subjected to sexual misconduct and making contact with the SeMPRO Client Response Team.¹⁰

Clients who have recently been subjected to sexual misconduct are more likely to need crisis support and medical referral. They often seek assistance with system navigation and referrals for their next steps. The Client Response Team guides callers to identify, navigate, and access relevant services in their local area.¹¹ Clients who seek SeMPRO assistance for more historical incidents may present with different or additional needs such as clarifying administrative or legal process.

There was an increase in clients who sought assistance with a recent sexual misconduct incident during 2021–22 (Figure 3). Clients predominantly sought help from SeMPRO within a year of the incident (Figure 4) and many of these sought help within a month of the incident. The volume of clients who called about less recent incidents has fluctuated each year. In 2021–22, only 27 clients called about incidents from more than 12 months prior to the call.

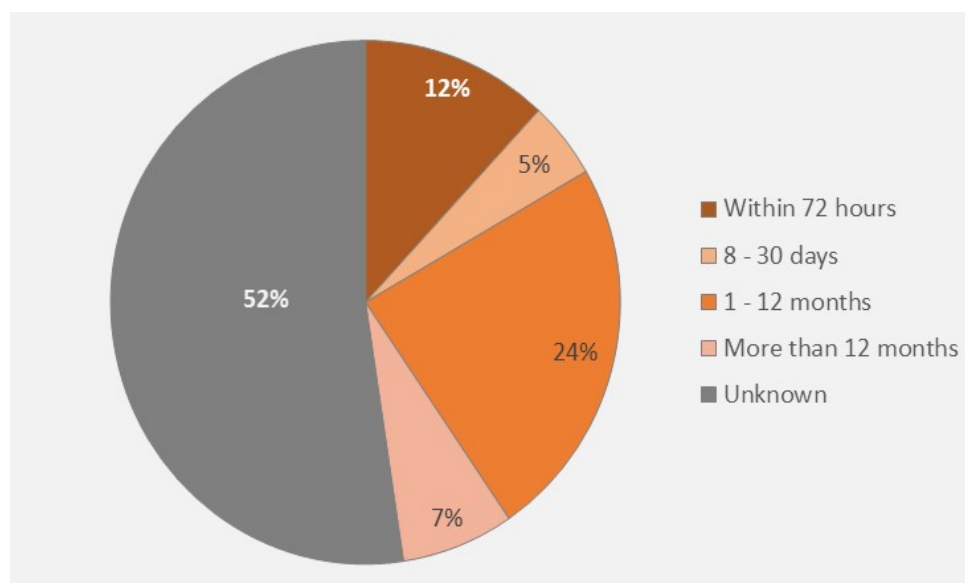
¹⁰ SeMPRO commenced tracking the time between an incident and contact with the Client Response team in 2016–17 to better understand the demand for services.

¹¹ 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.

Figure 3: SeMPRO clients – number of recent and historical incidents 2013–2022

The data in Figure 3 show There was an increase in clients who sought assistance with a recent sexual misconduct incident during 2021–22, from 60 clients in 2020–21 to 88 clients in 2021–22. Slightly more clients (95 clients) did not disclose the date of the incident.

The number of clients who do not divulge information about when the incident happened has steadily increased over the past four years, from nine to 95 cases (Figure 3). This reflects, in part, person-centred and trauma-informed service delivery where client information is not proactively solicited unless it is clinically relevant. SeMPRO psychologists and social workers allow clients to disclose information at their own pace and in their own way. They are not pressured for specific demographic or incident detail. This is an example of how person-centred trauma-informed process empowers the client by allowing them to control the conversation.

Figure 4: Support clients – days before for contacting SeMPRO, 2021–22

The data in Figure 4 show that 52 per cent of Support clients did not disclose when an incident happened, and 41 per cent sought help from SeMPRO within a year of the incident

Gender

During 2021–22, most SeMPRO Support clients were women (88 per cent, Figure 5).¹² This reflects the national profile of women being more likely to be the victim of sexual assault than men.¹³ Women also experience other forms of sexual misconduct more than men, including sexual harassment and gender discrimination.¹⁴

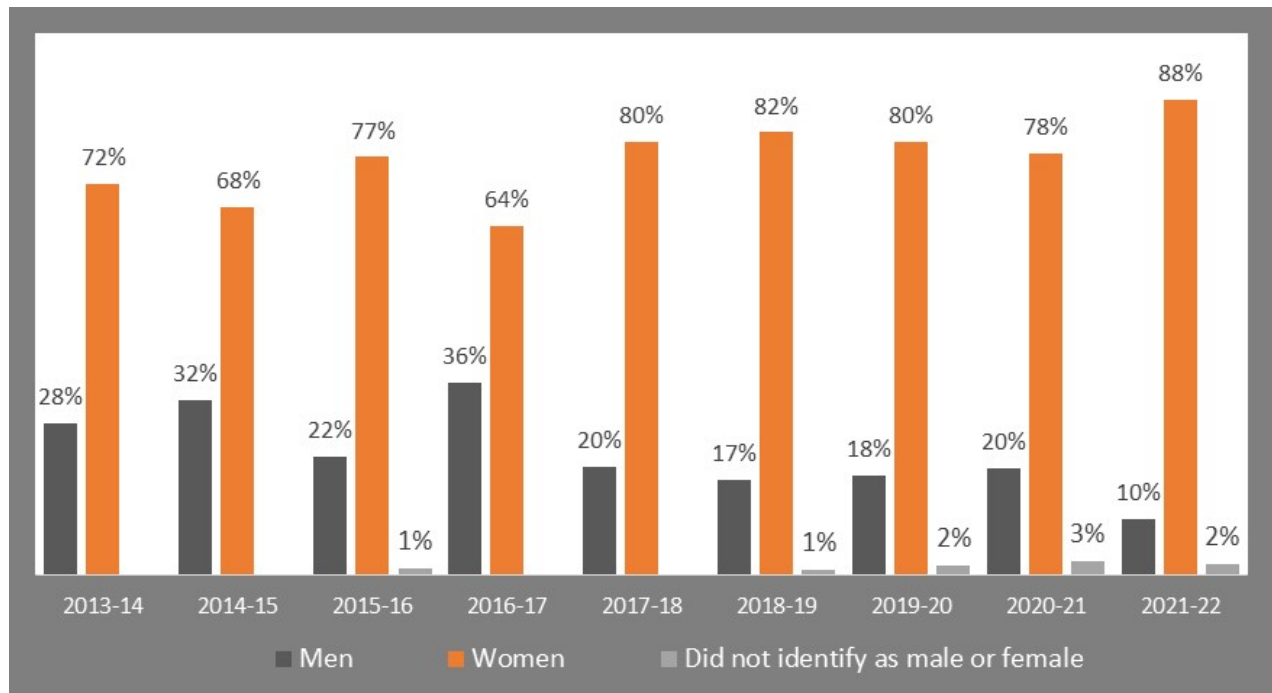
¹² A minority of Support clients identified as non-binary or did not provide information about their gender. In this figure these clients are grouped as 'Did not identify as male or female'. In years where there were no clients in this category, the '0%' marker has been omitted.

¹³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) *Recorded Crime – Victims*. ABS cat. No. 4510.0. Canberra: ABS. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/recorded-crime-victims/latest-release>. Eighty four per cent of the victims of sexual assaults reported to police in 2020 were women.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) *Crime Victimisation, Australia, 2019–20*. ABS cat. No. 4530.0. Canberra: ABS. Crime Victimisation, 2019–20 indicates women were the impacted person in 78 per cent of the self-reported sexual assaults in the 12 months prior to completing the survey.

¹⁴ Our Watch (2021) *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia* (2nd ed.). Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch.

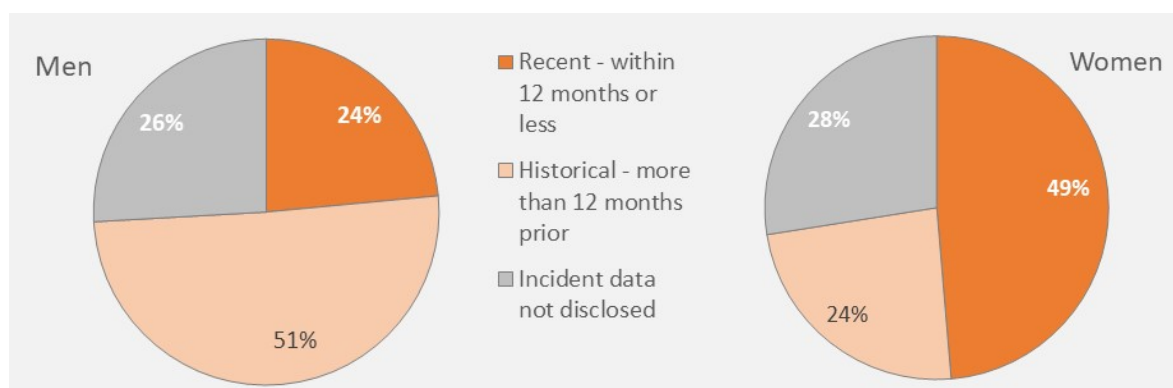
Townsend, N.; D. Loxton, N. Egan, I. Barnes, E. Byrnes, P. Forder (2022) *A life course approach to determining the prevalence and impact of sexual violence in Australia: Findings from the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health*. Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. www.anrows.org.au.

Figure 5: Support clients by gender, 2013–2022

The data in Figure 4 show that historically most SeMPRO Support clients were women and trending up over the years, from 72 per cent women in 2013-14 to 88 per cent women in 2021-22.

Male and female Support clients used SeMPRO services differently. Men delayed making initial contact for longer than women (Figure 6).

- A quarter of male Support clients since 2013 requested assistance with an incident in the prior 12 months.
- Half of female Support clients since 2013 requested assistance with a recent incident.

Figure 6: Support clients recent and historical incidents for men and women 2013–22

The data in Figure 6 show combined information about men and women Support clients from 2013. 51 per cent of men delayed making initial contact for more than 12 months, where as 24 per cent of women delayed making initial contact for more than 12 months of the incident.

This is consistent with the rate of male help seeking in other areas. Research indicates men are less likely than women to seek help from health professionals for problems as diverse as depression, substance abuse, physical disabilities, health issues and stressful life events.

- A quarter of male Support clients since 2013 requested assistance with an incident in the prior 12 months.
- Half of female Support clients since 2013 requested assistance with a recent incident.

Men's delayed help seeking behaviour is exacerbated when the nature of the experience runs counter to traditional masculine ideologies, such as when a man experiences sexual misconduct. Furthermore, men may fear additional stigma by seeking mental health treatment.¹⁵ SeMPRO works to minimise the barriers that all personnel may have to reporting and help seeking behaviours. Some people, such as men, have additional barriers.

- The 1800 SeMPRO Service has men and women in the team who are available to respond to clients who have a preference.
- SeMPRO education materials invite attendees to think about how different genders can face different barriers to help seeking and reporting. SeMPRO educational material is reported in the Educating Defence section (see page 13).

Service to Defence

More than half of the Support clients in 2021–22 were currently serving ADF members (56 per cent, Figure 7). Civilians were a small proportion of SeMPRO Support clients. Thirty per cent of Support clients did not disclose their ADF Service status.¹⁶

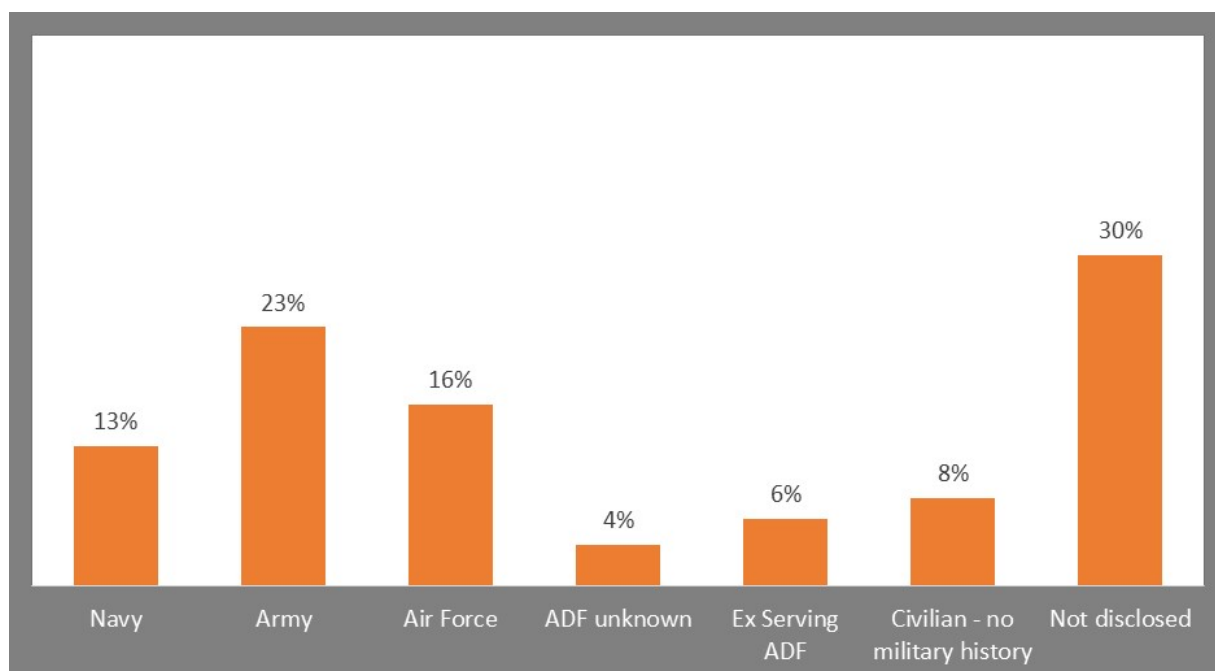
There was an increase in the number of Support clients who did not disclose their service status compared to the previous year (increased by 17 per cent). Ex-serving members and civilians continue to be a small subgroup of Support clients.

¹⁵ Galdas, P. M., Cheater, F., & Marshall, P. (2005). Men and health help-seeking behaviour: literature review. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 49(6), 616-623.

Silvestrini, M., & Chen, J. A. (2021). "It's a sign of weakness:" Masculinity, Help-Seeking Behaviors, and Gender-Specific Experiences Accessing VA PTSD Care.

Vincent A. D., P. G. Drioli-Phillips, J. Le, L. Cusack, T. J. Schultz, M. A. McGee MA, D. A. Turnbull, G. A. Wittert GA (2018). Health behaviours of Australian men and the likelihood of attending a dedicated men's health service. *BMC Public Health* 30;18(1):1078. doi: 10.1186/s12889-018-5992-6. PMID: 30165836; PMCID: PMC6117954. "

¹⁶ 1800 SeMPRO psychologists and counsellors do not question the client about specific demographic details. This is part of the person-centered trauma-informed approach which empowers callers to choose to disclose what they feel comfortable with.

Figure 7: Support clients by Service type, 2021–22

The data in Figure 7 show the composition of Support clients by Service¹⁷; 13 per cent Navy, 23 per cent Army, 16 per cent Air Force, and four per cent were current serving members who did not disclose their service.

¹⁷ Civilians with no military history include Defence public servants and a small number of non-Defence civilians.

2. Advice clients – individual advice on incident management and response

The initial response a person receives after making a disclosure about sexual misconduct can have enduring positive or negative effects. Advice clients are the people around the person who has been directly impacted by sexual misconduct. Advice clients seek help from SeMPRO to make sure they can provide the best response possible to their team member, friend, colleague, or family member. SeMPRO helps them to respond promptly and sensitively. Advice clients include:

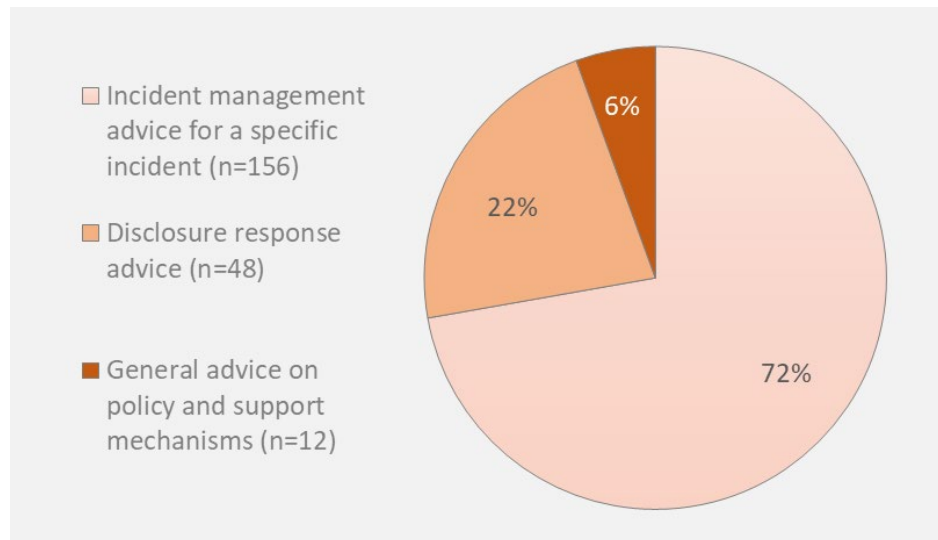
- commanders, managers, and supervisors who seek guidance on applying Defence policy requirements while focusing on the wellbeing of those involved, and
- colleagues, family members, and friends who seek advice on how to assist a person who has disclosed being subjected to sexual misconduct.

Advice clients receive detailed tailored advice on using trauma-informed and person-centred approaches with people who have disclosed or reported sexual misconduct. Trauma-informed person-centred responses improve the wellbeing of the impacted person and indirectly build work environments that encourage reporting and help seeking behaviour.

If it is needed, the SeMPRO Client Response Team can advise on: policy and system navigation; strategies for responding to the impacted person in a way that ensures their safety, builds trust, and provides choice in complex work environments; and advice on medical and mental health service provision inside and outside of Defence. This expertise is particularly helpful for those in the impacted person's chain of command.

Half of 1800 SeMPRO Service clients were Advice clients in the 2021–22 financial year (refer to Figure 1), which is a reduction on prior years. Advice clients can be grouped into three sub-categories grouped by their specific questions or needs (Figure 8):

- Incident management advice – Clients who need advice for managing a specific reported incident, generally as a commander, manager, or supervisor. Three quarters of Advice clients in 2021–22 sought help with specific incident management.
- Disclosure response advice – Clients who are not responsible for incident management but have requested help from SeMPRO to assist them with a disclosure by a friend or colleague. These clients are generally colleagues, friends, or family members to an impacted person.
- General advice – Clients who sought information on Defence policy, services, and frameworks for managing sexual misconduct incidents. These clients did not discuss the circumstances of a particular incident.

Figure 8: Types of advice provided to Advice clients, 2021–22

The data in Figure 8 show the sub categories of Advice clients; 72 per cent sought incident management advice for a specific incident, 22 per cent sought advice on how best to respond to an incident disclosed to them, and six per cent sought general advice about sexual misconduct policy and processes.

3. Debriefing clients – mental health support to people at risk of vicarious trauma

People who offer their support to victims of sexual misconduct, either as a friend or professionally, can feel overwhelmed. The 1800 SeMPRO team provides confidential debriefing services and other mental health support to people who are at risk of experiencing such vicarious trauma. These are *Debriefing clients*.

Debriefing clients often work in incident management, reporting, and investigation areas in Defence; but can also include family and friends of an impacted person. They have their own needs and reactions to the people they are trying to support and the incident content. These clients are often seeking help because of a sense of burnout or feeling overwhelmed as a result other people's experience of sexual misconduct. Debriefing aims to prevent potential psychological trauma that might arise from indirect exposure to trauma and to maintain clients' emotional capacity to continue to aid others.

The 1800 SeMPRO team guides Debriefing clients to identify their own resolutions, resources, and options for maintaining their wellbeing following incident exposure. This can include generating strategies to make changes in aspects of their work, identifying buffers, or increasing resilience.

Debriefing clients have comprised a small number of SeMPRO clients from 2013–14 to 2021–22 as shown in Figure 1.

Educating Defence

All Defence personnel have a responsibility to help create a safe and respectful workplace free from sexual misconduct. Successful prevention and response to sexual misconduct relies on a number of approaches and education is a central pillar.

SeMPRO develops and delivers education products that are designed to address the personal responsibilities of all Defence personnel covering:

- what sexual misconduct is,
- Defence's behaviour expectations with regard to sexual misconduct,
- reporting options,
- paths for accessing help,
- how to respond to a disclosure in a person-centred trauma-informed way, and
- for those with management responsibilities, how to manage incidents of sexual misconduct appropriately and in a way that minimises the potential for further harm to the impacted person.

The suite of SeMPRO education products includes a high level briefing for all personnel and workshops on incident response and management that are tailored to specific groups. All SeMPRO training aims to enhance confidence in reporting and to encourage help seeking behaviours more broadly. Each sexual misconduct education product has a proficiency that is valid for three years.

Sexual Misconduct General Awareness briefings

The Sexual Misconduct General Awareness brief introduces sexual misconduct concepts and issues to a broad audience. The General Awareness brief provides: 1) an overview of SeMPRO, 2) a definition of sexual misconduct and examples of what constitutes sexual misconduct, 3) information about consent that incorporates changes to consent laws in Australia, and 4) information on Defence policy and incident reporting options.

Sexual Misconduct Incident Management and Response suite

The sexual misconduct incident management and response workshops focus on harm minimisation. These workshops emphasise how to respond to an impacted person using person-centred trauma-informed approaches in order to preserve their wellbeing. Incident management and response workshops are available to personnel who have direct responsibility for others – such as commanding officers, chaplains, and supervisors.

There are three different workshops tailored to different roles Defence members may undertake in response to disclosure of sexual misconduct; incident management, incident response and wellbeing. There is also a workshop specifically designed for chaplains.

- The Sexual Misconduct Incident Management workshop is designed for decision makers. The workshop outlines the policy and legal requirements in allegations of criminal and non-criminal sexual misconduct. It guides participants to generate strategies that both employ a person-centred and trauma-informed approach toward the impacted person, while also navigating the incident management process in Defence’s unique work environments.
- The Sexual Misconduct Incident Response and Wellbeing workshop was launched in 2021. It is for personnel who, because of their rank or their role, may receive a disclosure about sexual misconduct but do not directly manage incidents or have decision making responsibilities. This workshop offers detailed guidance on how to provide support for an impacted person using a trauma-informed person-centred approach. There is also instruction on Defence policy requirements, including reporting obligations.
- Sexual Misconduct Incident Response and Management for Chaplains helps to equip ADF Chaplains when receiving disclosures in Defence. Chaplains have a particular role of trust in the organisation and may be a first point of disclosure for an incident. The workshop teaches blending chaplains’ existing knowledge and experience in providing pastoral care with Defence environments, services, and policy requirements.

Good practice incident management and response aims to have positive impacts on the Defence community beyond those who are involved directly in an allegation. When commanders, managers, supervisors, and others apply a person-centred trauma-informed approach they demonstrate these behaviours to all those under their command or around them.

Education delivery in 2021–22

SeMPRO initiated virtual classroom delivery in 2020 that maintains the interactive participant experience of in-person workshops. Virtual classrooms have advantages over face to face delivery: the impact of rank is diffused as attendees do not have their rank delineated on the platform, and people from diverse locations can attend with or without their colleagues. In 2021–22, SeMPRO education leaned more into virtual classroom delivery. This was the first year where people dialled into a workshop from overseas.

During 2021–22, one fifth of Defence personnel undertook SeMPRO training (23,530 personnel)¹⁸.

¹⁸ In Table 1 we report the number of ‘**proficiencies**’. One person can hold multiple proficiencies and in 2021-22 more than 7,000 people held multiple proficiencies.

In Table 2 we report the number of **people** who held a current proficiency in the Sexual Misconduct General Awareness training. Some personnel are current in more than one type of course. Therefore, the number of ‘current proficiencies’ is higher than the number of Defence personnel who have a current proficiency.

By 30 June 2021–22:

- more than half (57 per cent) of current Defence personnel had undertaken one or more SeMPRO courses between February 2015 and 30 June 2022, and
- more than a third of Defence personnel are currently¹⁹ proficient in the Sexual Misconduct General Awareness brief (Table 1).

Table 1: Current SeMPRO education proficiencies in Defence, 30 June 2022

Education product	Current Proficiencies in Defence as at 30 June 2022	
Sexual Misconduct General Awareness brief	43,320	35%
Sexual Misconduct Incident Response and Wellbeing workshop	952	1%
Sexual Misconduct Incident Management workshop	950	1%
Sexual Misconduct Incident Response and Management for Chaplains	115	<1%
All current proficiencies awarded in SeMPRO education products	45,355	36%

The data in Table 1 shows 35 per cent of Defence personnel held current proficiency in the Sexual Misconduct General Awareness brief. These data include Permanent (SERCAT 5 and 6), Reserve (SERCAT 3, 4, and 5) and APS Defence personnel.

The majority of current proficiencies are in the General Awareness brief (35 per cent of all Defence personnel, Table 2). The number of personnel with a proficiency in incident management and incident response is considerably lower than for the General Awareness brief because the targeted audience for these workshops are much fewer in number, primarily roles and occupations with responsibility for others, such as commanders or chaplains.

Table 2: Defence personnel with current proficiency in Sexual Misconduct General Awareness, 30 June 2022 – by Service

Service	Sexual Misconduct General Awareness proficiency, at 30 June 2022	
Navy	17,212	14%
Army	7,833	6%
Air Force	16,426	13%
Defence APS	1,848	2%
Total Defence personnel	43,320	35%

The data in Table 2 show the proportion of individuals who completed the General Awareness brief by their Service. This varies from 2 per cent of Defence APS to 14 per cent of Navy.

¹⁹ Proficiency is the period of time when training is considered 'current'. Proficiencies for SeMPRO education products is current for three years after completing a course.

Policy and Expertise for Defence

SeMPRO was created primarily as a response service for Defence personnel impacted by sexual misconduct and as an education provider. SeMPRO will always prioritise high quality service delivery aimed at improving outcomes for individuals. SeMPRO also provides subject matter expertise to the enterprise as part of a system of responses to generate broad-based change. The following section describes key long term strategic projects that were completed in 2021–22 including SeMPRO's work within Defence's internal and external reviews on continuous improvement.

When requested, SeMPRO assists other public sector agencies, non-profits, and corporate organisations with education methodology, policy design and process advice. While Australia's public focus on addressing sexual misconduct in workplaces and education institutions has increased in recent years, SeMPRO has focused on optimal response to, and prevention of, sexual misconduct since 2013. Other organisations request assistance or advice from SeMPRO because of this expertise. Such requests are at an organisation-level, seeking assistance with regards policy, client service delivery, and education design. SeMPRO received more of these requests in 2021–22 than any previous year.

Sexual misconduct policy review

In 2021–22, SeMPRO reviewed the central policy document for managing reported incidents of sexual misconduct, the *Complaints and Alternative Resolutions Manual (CARM) Chapter 9 – Responding to Sexual Misconduct*.

- Defence-wide consultation was undertaken to identify where those applying the policy needed more clarity and where other policy changes impacted on the directions for sexual misconduct incident management in CARM Chapter 9.
- The policy was updated to reflect changes to Australian consent laws, including affirmative consent and stealthing dimensions.
- The policy extended the required sexual misconduct incident management processes to also explicitly include all intimate image abuse offence types and stalking incidents with a sexualised element.
- A further key change to the 2021–22 release added potential actions under the Defence Force Discipline Act 1982 (Cth) for failure to apply the incident requirements set out in CARM Chapter 9.

Disclosing, Managing, and Reporting Sexual Misconduct – an interactive information tool

Ensuring personnel are as well equipped as they can be to navigate reporting, incident management, and support service access is a central dimension to both SeMPRO client services and education streams. The primary policy document, *CARM Chapter 9*, is nested within a network of legal requirements, policy documents, processes, and services that together form the framework for managing sexual misconduct in Defence. While multiple paths for disclosing, reporting, and investigations generate internal and external choices for people, it also culminates in a complex landscape of policy and options.

SeMPRO created an interactive process map to capture all of the elements of this system in a single source of comprehensive and accessible information – the *Disclosing, Managing, and Reporting Sexual Misconduct* framework navigation portal²⁰.

The navigation portal provides extensive information to the widest possible audience, when they need it, and in a format that is easily assimilated (Figure 9). It outlines enterprise-wide processes, highlights connections to external law enforcement, links policies and resources for assisting personnel, and gives access and eligibility details for all internal and external services options.

Figure 9: Disclosing, Managing, and Reporting Sexual Misconduct framework navigation portal opening page



Information is presented in a cascading series of windows coupled with hyperlinks to related material. Using the framework navigation portal can maximise information accessibility and utility for people with different needs with the aid of filtered views and visual pathways. It can be used as an overall map of processes or navigated as a series of process steps or choice points.

²⁰ [DPG BMS](#) – Disclosing, Managing and Reporting Sexual Misconduct, accessed 2022/08/12. The portal is hosted on the Business Management Systems web page. It is accessible to all Defence personnel directly, or via SeMPRO and CARM web pages.

Review of SeMPRO education products

SeMPRO education services are designed to empower Defence personnel to better understand the nature of sexual misconduct and enable Defence personnel to respond to an impacted person in a practical, person-centred and trauma-informed way. The Defence sexual misconduct education continuum strives to meet learner needs at appropriate times across their career.

In 2021–22, SeMPRO conducted a review of its education products to modernise the content, incorporate changes to laws in Australia, and pursue continuous improvement. SeMPRO identified that sexual misconduct awareness training could be designed as an integrated set of training modules. Combined with the ongoing incident management and response workshops, these new training modules target key learning points to positively influence attitudes and behaviours.

Defence has endorsed five sexual misconduct training modules, delivered one per year over five years, to form part of a holistic education continuum. This will provide a standard foundation of knowledge for all Defence members. This program of work will employ iterative learning, providing new and relevant knowledge to Defence personnel that builds over the five years. Learners will engage with different material each year, with each successive module growing the learning from prior modules while presenting a new focus.

- Foundation of Knowledge – provides foundation knowledge and will replace the General Awareness brief. This module will be part of Defence mandatory training for all areas of Defence from 2023.
- Four Application of Knowledge modules – designed to deepen knowledge about key areas introduced in the Foundation of Knowledge module. The foci for application of knowledge areas are: nuanced consent, technology, peer response to disclosure, and protective behaviours.

The education concept was endorsed by the Defence People Committee in 2022 and will be part of the Defence mandatory training suite of courses. The first phase of this continuum, the Foundation of Knowledge training, will be launched early in 2023.

New initiatives beyond education

In 2021–22, the Defence People Committee endorsed trialing new approaches to understanding sexual misconduct in Defence, refining the framework for managing it, and seeking to prevent incidents from taking place. Three projects were endorsed in 2021–22; a business framework review, a data and expertise sharing trial, and an environmental risk assessment project.

Business framework review

Given the complex landscape of policies, processes, systems, and services that apply to sexual misconduct, a framework-wide review was commenced in 2021–22 to analyse whether this landscape is able to meet the needs of the whole organisation in all or most circumstances.

The project sought to examine the interactions between components to show where needs are met, where some needs cannot be met, areas where needs could be met more smoothly, and where there is duplicated effort. This systems analysis will be incorporated into ongoing annual reviews of the framework navigation portal as part of continuous business improvement.

Data sharing

Multiple areas across Defence hold diverse lines of expertise in Defence culture, incident management, investigations, and personnel response. A Sexual Misconduct Data Sharing Forum trial will be undertaken to explore the utility of exchanging understanding, analysis, and experience between Defence business units. The purpose is to consolidate the enterprise level of understanding, and any specific trends in sexual misconduct, by using multiple Defence data sources to contextualise the information available in each.

Environmental risk assessment

Pending final ethics approval, SeMPRO will trial using site-specific assessments to design actions, interventions, and changes to prevent sexual misconduct. With ethics approval, the trial will use the knowledge of personnel in location to understand the unique risks, protective factors, and opportunities for change that could reduce the potential for sexual misconduct taking place using the socio-ecological model of crime prevention.

Appendix – SeMPRO key concepts

Sexual misconduct

Defence uses the term ‘sexual misconduct’ to encompass the spectrum of unwanted and unwelcome sexualised behaviours including criminal offences. Sexual misconduct specifically spans sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual offences.

- 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.
- 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 offences are crimes as defined in Commonwealth, State, and Territory legislation. Specific offences differ across Australian states and territories.

Applying the term ‘sexual misconduct’ to describe all unwanted sexualised behaviours is common but not universal. Other terms used to cover the full range of behaviours include ‘sexual harassment’ and ‘sexual assault’. Defence uses those terms to exclusively reflect specific behaviours as they are defined in legislation.

Disclosing, reporting, and investigating

Disclosing, reporting, and investigating are separate concepts. The term *disclosure* means to tell another person about a sexual misconduct incident to access help in some way. Reporting means to advise someone with the authority or obligation to action information about a sexual misconduct incident. While an investigation may be one outcome from reporting, it is a distinct process.

Disclosure and restricted disclosure

Disclosure often means revealing information about a sexual misconduct incident to a friend, family member, healthcare professional, or to seek other professional or informal support.

Defence encourages people to seek help above all else and provides multiple avenues for confidential health and mental health services for personnel impacted by sexual misconduct without making a report. Personnel are able to self-refer to SeMPRO, medical officers, psychologists, chaplains, and social workers in Defence. Disclosures to these services is not shared with command teams without the client's consent and are not subject to Defence mandatory incident reporting (CARM 9.5.0.1, paragraph 3).

Current serving ADF members who use health and mental health services because of a sexual offence, without making a report to Defence, have made a *Restricted Disclosure*. All clients of Defence support services receive the same high quality care irrespective of their decision to make a report or their decision to share whether they have reported with their practitioner. Only a subset of clients are identified as Restricted Disclosure clients because they meet a specific set of circumstances and not because there is a difference in the service received from SeMPRO. All other clients who seek support services as an impacted person are described as Unrestricted Disclosures.

Restricted disclosure is a mechanism that was formalised with the establishment of SeMPRO. It articulates the ability for current serving ADF members who are subjected to sexual offences to access support, medical assistance, and other services without automatically triggering notifiable incident reporting obligations by the service provider.

SeMPRO clients are described as making a restricted disclosure when they contact SeMPRO for support without disclosing or reporting the incident to any other Defence personnel with notifiable incident reporting obligations. All SeMPRO clients receive a confidential service within the same boundaries regardless of their choice to report an incident or not.

Reporting

Reporting in Defence means advising a commander or manager, the Joint Military Police Unit (JMPU), the civilian police, or an authorised officer under the Public Interest Disclosure scheme about an incident of sexual misconduct. Personnel subjected to sex discrimination may choose to report the matter to the Australian Human Rights Commission. Defence encourages people directly impacted by sexual misconduct to report the incident to Defence, or within the civilian system, but there is no obligation to do so.

All sexual misconduct reports made to Defence are to be actioned promptly and sensitively. CARM Chapter 9 sets out the required actions for commanders and managers who receive a report about sexual misconduct and the *Disclosing, Managing, and Reporting Sexual Misconduct* framework navigation portal details the processes to be followed.

SeMPRO services are available to aid clients to assess their options in the military or civilian legal systems.

Mandatory reporting

Sexual offences, and all other criminal offences including intimate image abuse and stalking, are notifiable incidents in Defence which means they trigger mandatory reporting requirements for most personnel. Sexual harassment incidents and sex discrimination do not attract mandatory reporting requirements.

Personnel who become aware of a sexual offence are required to report it to their commander or manager or directly to the Joint Military Police Unit. There are some exclusions. The victim of a criminal offence, those who are able to hold information because of their profession, and other circumstances such as a disclosure to a family member are not subject to mandatory reporting.

Investigating

Defence applies person-centred trauma-informed processes in sexual misconduct incident management. This includes providing choices to people who are impacted by sexual misconduct. Providing choices is a part of returning control to the impacted person and supports their recovery and their wellbeing. In keeping with this, personnel impacted by sexual misconduct can elect not to have the matter investigated if they do not want to. They can request an investigation be undertaken by the Joint Military Police Unit rather than civilian police where both have jurisdiction, or they may approach civilian police directly.

The military police will liaise with civilian police to determine jurisdiction, and which policing agency will take carriage of the investigation, where the impacted person wishes for an investigation to take place without a preference for either.

Harm minimisation

Harm minimisation is about reducing the harm to a person as a central concern to all actions and decisions. The principle of harm minimisation aims to influence the behaviour of personnel around the directly impacted person to ensure good practice responses to disclosures of sexual misconduct.

All SeMPRO activities are conducted using the principle of harm minimisation. *Person-centred* and *trauma-informed* are two primary skills aimed to effect harm minimisation. The team's education products are designed and delivered using trauma-informed and person-centred approaches as well as teaching these skills to participants.

Person-centred response

Defence applies a person-centred approach 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.

A person-centred approach is where the person is supported to lead their own care.²¹ Person-centred approaches originated in the disability sector and are now used within the mental health sector, aged care services, schools, the healthcare sector, and criminal justice system.

The focus is on the person and what they can do, not their condition or disability. Support should focus on achieving the person's aspirations and be tailored to their needs and unique circumstances.

²¹ What is a person-led approach? [What is a person-led approach? - Principles for effective support \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/what-is-a-person-led-approach) accessed 2022/08/31. This resource explains person-centred approach from a medical point of view. It is a useful resource that uses simple language.

They are a set of practical values based tools and skills that help find ways to support the person rather seeing the person as broken and needing to be ‘fixed’²². A person-centred approach contributes to building organisational cultures of learning and accountability through empowering the individual. This is in contrast to a process that places the organisational systems as a higher priority than the person (Table 3).

Person-centred approaches complement trauma-informed design. Person-centred service delivery places the needs, wishes, and particular circumstances of the individual at the centre of the service. This is distinct to placing the needs of the support person or the organisation at the center of the service.

Table 3: Person-centred versus system-centred approaches

PERSON-CENTRED	SYSTEM-CENTRED
Talking with the person	Talking about the person
Planning with the person	Planning for the person
Focused on strengths, abilities, skills	Focused on labels/diagnosis, deficits
Finding solutions that could work for anyone, preferably community based	Creating supports based on what works for people with ‘that diagnosis’
Things are done that way because they work for the person	Things are done that way because they work for staff or the service
Family and community members are seen as true partners	Family members & community seen as peripheral

Trauma-informed response

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 misconduct²³. Trauma can have physical and emotional impacts on daily life and in the workplace. SeMPRO acknowledges that trauma can exist in any group. SeMPRO client services and education products are designed and delivered with the awareness of the impacts of trauma on individuals and act to minimise re-traumatisation.

Applying trauma-informed services means to consider the pervasive nature of trauma and promote environments of healing and recovery rather than practices that may inadvertently re-traumatise (Figure 10).²⁴

²² NDP Factsheet *What is a person-centred approach?* www.ndp.org.au accessed 2022/08/31.

²³ American Psychiatric Association 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th Edition). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association.

²⁴ [What is Trauma-Informed Care? - University at Buffalo School of Social Work - University at Buffalo](#) open access resource. Accessed 2022/08/31.

Figure 10: Trauma-informed care



SeMPRO support and advice is provided in accordance with trauma-informed principles of safety, trust, choice, empowerment, and collaboration. The practitioner will listen to the client and assist in identifying current needs, appropriate supports, referral agencies, and next steps if needed. A brief explanation will be provided on the service and how it operates. Contact with 1800 SeMPRO is confidential and is not shared without the client's consent unless there are exceptional circumstances such as risk of harm to self or others. SeMPRO can be contacted anonymously for support or advice. The service is provided by both male and female practitioners.

SeMPRO applies the following five trauma-informed principles to its client service delivery:

- **Safety** – Creating safety with clients means working with them to generate their own strategies to promote their physical and emotional safety in the present and into the future; to identify safety behaviours; and to establish protective behaviours.
- **Choice** – Maximising the client's choices is achieved by providing all possible options available on small details as well as large decisions.
- **Collaboration** – Collaboration with clients means seeking their input to achieve their desired outcomes and identifying avenues for the next steps to take.
- **Trust** – Trust is created by respecting the client's confidentiality and privacy; by being transparent about the role undertaken by the practitioner; by following through on commitments made; and by building understanding of the systems with which the client will interact.
- **Empowerment** – Giving authority to the impacted person to genuinely guide their own path is empowering. Clients are provided as much help as possible to assist them to gain ownership of their decision making while acknowledging that control in some processes sometimes cannot be complete.