



Australian Government
Defence

Women in the Australian Defence Force 2023-2024



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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>

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Executive Summary

Since 2013, the Women in the ADF (WiADF) Report has tracked women's participation and experiences in the Australian Defence Force. Initially the report was a part of the Defence Annual Report but has since become a standalone effort. Based around thirteen key performance indicators (KPI), the report helps Defence monitor workforce and workplace components and identify areas that may need to be further addressed. Defence is committed to providing workplaces where women feel safe, valued, supported, and respected.

The 2023-24 WiADF Report includes five-year trends to support monitoring of change since 2019-2020. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ADF workforce and workplaces are reflected in this data but the long-term consequences of this period are still being unpacked.

Growing the ADF and increasing women's participation

The 2024 Defence Workforce Plan identified three key lines of effort for the ADF workforce:

- **stabilise** the number of ADF members by 2026 by balancing inflow and outflow of members for the permanent force,
- **remediate** the depth of the junior and middle ranks cohort by 2030, particularly for 'critical' and 'at risk' employment categories,
- **grow** the size of the ADF's permanent force to 69,000 by the early 2030's with the capability to support and sustain this growth.

The percentage of women in the ADF and Services has increased since 2022-23 at a rate consistent with the past five years (equal to or less than half a percentage point each year). In 2023, stretch targets for women's participation were set with a goal end date of 2030. These were:

- 25% for the permanent ADF,
- 28% for Navy,
- 18% for Army, and
- 35% for Air Force

Stretch targets will continue to be reviewed, including in the context of ADF inflow achievement.

As part of stabilising the permanent ADF workforce, Defence is working to increase the median length of service from 7 years to around 12 years. Men have a longer median length of service at time of separation than women with a bigger difference for Officers than Other Ranks members. The difference in median length of service for Officers was 5.7 years for Navy, 3.8 years for Army, and 5.4 for Air Force. This difference is much smaller for Other Ranks, with a difference of 1.6 years for Navy, and 0.1 years for Army. Air Force Other Ranks was the exception with a difference of 7.4 years. Increasing women's length of service will need targeted actions to identify the drivers of this difference.

The separation rate for permanent force ADF women in 2023-24 was lower than for men (8.5% for women compared to 11% for men). Men and women separate at similar rates for voluntary and involuntary separations but men separate at a larger percentage for age retirements and women separate as trainees at a slightly higher percentage. Men's higher separation rates for age retirements is consistent with women having a shorter median length of service and the lower participation rate of women 30-40 years ago who would now be reaching retirement age. Of the Permanent ADF members who separated in 2023-24, 49.5% transferred to the Reserves and 3.5% transferred Services. The involuntary separation rate was 39.6% for Navy, 39.0% for Army, and 38.5% for Air Force.

Defence will continue to invest in improving the experiences of women in the ADF, address barriers for retention, and work to increase recruitment. This work is supported by the rollout of workforce initiatives that improve the life/work balance of ADF members and improve Defence's employee value proposition.

Workforce Initiatives Introduced in 2023-24 and Workforce Successes

As part of the **ADF Employment Offer Modernisation Program** and the **Recruitment and Retention Program**, a broad range of initiatives have been introduced to support the workforce, bolster the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) and these will positively impact the participation of women. The impact of these policies can be complex because there may be barriers to their uptake that are hard to identify and/or articulate. For example, the availability of SERCAT 6 and the Total Workforce System has strong positive potential for improving flexibility service arrangements for members. However, the uptake of these options remain low for men and women. Future WiADF reports will explore the barriers to policy uptake and the gendered experiences that may be drivers.

The ADF Leave Framework introduced from 1 July 2023 increased base recreation leave from 20 to 25 days and increased the flexibility for how members use their leave. This includes the ability to purchase leave, take leave at half pay, and transfer leave between dual serving couples.

Increased investment in the **Defence Assisted Study Scheme (DASS)** is providing ADF personnel easier access to personal and professional development opportunities and more choice in what can be studied. Women use the DASS at a higher rate than their Service participation rates and as such will benefit greatly from these changes and the budgeted commitment of over \$24.3 million for 2024-25.

Parents and families will benefit from multiple initiatives that were introduced. The Defence categorisation framework and terms were updated to be more flexible and inclusive for modern family structures.

ADF paid maternity leave increased from 14 to 18 weeks and paid parental leave doubled from 20 days to 40 days. However, this remains a gendered entitlement and does not support equal sharing of parenting responsibilities. Defence's provision of a gendered parental leave policy is an outlier for large Australian employers with almost all other employers of more than 5,000 people choosing to provide non-gendered entitlements.

The **ADF Family Health Benefit Program** was amended to double the annual allowance for eligible dependents and expand the scope of available services. From January to June 2024, the program paid approximately \$14 million in benefits to families which is an increase of \$6.3 million compared to the same time period last year.

Service Success Stories

While there have been numerous successes for the ADF overall, each Service has their own successes for women to highlight for 2023-24.

An eight-week posting to Navy's Centre for Innovation to finish off Seaman Elmarie Faurie's Gap Year program has led to an ongoing benefit to Navy. Her technical aptitude shone during her time at the Centre for Innovation, when an idea for a torch clip for Navy's diver community came through the Centre's Innovation Portal. The training Seaman Faurie received at the centre allowed her to design the solution and deliver the torch clip through 3D printing. She has now gone on to enlist into the Permanent Navy as a Marine Technician (a STEM workforce traditionally difficult to recruit women into).

Departing Fleet Base East in March 2024, the first all-female command navigation team in a destroyer (HMAS Hobart) is not only a demonstration that we're making progress, but we're breaking down long-standing barriers and opening the doors to many more opportunities. The team driving the billion-dollar warship included Commanding Officer Commander Tina Brown, Navigating Officer Lieutenant Tori Costello, Special Sea Duties Officer of the Watch Sub-Lieutenant Cameron Moncrieff and Quartermaster Able Seaman Kendall Byrnes – with numerous other women holding key incident control and safety positions.

The Defence Workforce Plan recognises the contribution of the part time workforce as an essential contribution to capability. The Total Workforce System (TWS) encompasses the permanent (SERCAT 6/7) and the part-time workforce (SERCAT 2/3/5). The TWS was designed to offer Defence personnel with flexibility of service. The part time workforce has also been an in-flow option for growth and a tool for retention, offering personnel flexibility when they need it. In 2023-24, Army demonstrated the strength of the Total Workforce System (TWS) in enabling women to continue to contribute to Army's capability in a capacity that suits them. Women represented 19.4% of all SERVOP C contracts (full time service) and 16.4% of SERCAT 5 (continuing part time service) personnel.

Air Force has achieved critical mass in the Combat and Security segment, a notable change since the 2022/23 report. There has been an increase to the net flow of women over the 2023-24 period compared to 2022-23, which is attributed to an increase in the Combat and Security women to men inflow ratio. Linked to this achievement is Air Force's approach to capability through diversity. This involves raising the Air Force profile as an employer of choice for women across all workforce segments through ongoing investment in initiatives such as the experiential Aviation Program for Women. Army has also continued to achieve growth within the Combat and security workforce segment despite the low propensity for women to serve in this segment.

Associated work

To grow the workforce and achieve a generational uplift in capabilities, Defence recognises the need to be a desired employer to the broadest possible spectrum of the Australian population. Defence is widening the aperture for recruitment to appeal to those who might not previously considered a career in the ADF. This includes providing opportunities for women; First Nations people; those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and people with a range of lived experiences to strengthen collaboration, problem solving and decision making.

In 2024, after three years of inquiry, the **Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide** (RCDVS) delivered their final report. The report and findings did not focus on gender specifically, but many of the issues raised have a gendered element to the experience. The RCDVS reported that ex-serving women are dying by suicide at twice the rate of the general Australian population of women. The impact of sexual violence in the ADF was highlighted as a significant issue and this disproportionately impacts women.⁵ Other key issues highlighted include burnout exacerbated by workforce hollowness, experiences of moral injury and institutional betrayal, exposure to unacceptable behaviour, and the pressures of service conditions on families that can contribute to relationship breakdown. The WiADF Report covers many of these issues across the KPI and identifies areas of difference between men and women's experiences.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide recommendations has reinforced focus on priority areas. While collectively all of the Royal Commission recommendations address aspects of culture, four specific recommendations are the priorities of the Defence Culture Blueprint (DCB) program. These are:

- Recommendation 9 – improve organisational culture and leadership accountability; recommendation 10 – implementation of the Respect@work legislation;
- Recommendation 11 – assessment of leadership performance against culture, health and wellbeing targets; and
- Recommendation 116 - improve the quality, evaluation translation and sharing of research findings.

Governance arrangements surrounding the DCB, including monitoring, evaluation and reporting will continue to mature with greater transparency between initiatives supporting broader culture and those specifically involving Women in ADF.

⁵ Factsheet – Military sexual violence, Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, 2024. Accessed at <https://defenceveteransuicide.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report-issues-factsheets> on 18th October 2024.

The Defence Australian Human Rights Commission Collaboration undertook two significant research projects across 2024 being the Defence Science and Technology Group Gender Equity project and the Officer Aviation project. Actions and Recommendations contained within these reports are being implemented and incorporated into the governance mechanisms of the Defence Culture Blueprint to enable the learning to be applied more broadly across Defence.

Next Steps

To meet emerging organisational and strategic needs, the Women in the ADF Report in 2025 will undergo the first major review since the KPI were set in 2016. This will include an evaluation of the thirteen KPI, the metrics, measures, and format of the report.

The report will also include a deep dive thematic approach each year to support the development of targeted interventions. These themes align with the implementation and evaluation of recommendations from the Australian Human Rights Commission, Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, the 2024 Defence Workforce Plan, and the Defence Culture Blueprint.

The first five themes are:

1. 2025 – Growing participation – linked to 2024 Workforce Plan Strategy Task 7.9, this will also explore external comparators for workforce participation
2. 2026 – Women's Health – connected to AHRC projects currently underway
3. 2027 – Carrying capacity of workforce segments
4. 2028 – Women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)
5. 2029 – Review of KPI longitudinal information

Preliminary planned revisions for the 13 KPI

A comprehensive review of the WiADF KPI will be undertaken for the preparation of the next WiADF Report (2024-25). This effort will modernise the KPI to ensure we continue to understand women's experiences in the ADF within the framing of the current people system conditions.

Initial work suggests the following changes are likely:

- Overall changes include refining the wording of the KPI to ensure they are measurable, actionable, and can be tracked over time. Although the KPI will be larger in focus due to the reduction in their number through combining overlapping themes, the content within will be streamlined and refined. The use of sub-KPI indicators will be considered to shape the logic within the KPI and make the report more approachable for readers looking for specific insights.
- **KPI 1** (Progress towards women's representation targets) and **KPI 2** (Progress towards reaching critical mass in identified employment categories)
 - These will be combined to reflect the overlapping themes and content.
- **KPI 3** (Increased acceptance of flexible work) will continue to focus on the theme of flexible work and service arrangements but will shift to include a greater emphasis on accessibility, barriers to use, and will incorporate content currently in **KPI 9** (Women transfer to the reserves and use Total Workforce Systems options at a similar rate to men).
- **KPI 4** (Efforts to ensure more women have opportunities to reach leadership), **KPI 10** (Women are represented proportionally in postings and deployments) and **KPI 12** (Increase in the number of women in leadership positions) will be combined due to the content being interrelated. This new KPI will concentrate on equal access to leadership opportunities for men and women.
- **KPI 5** (Retention of women is equal to men) will focus on gendered barriers to retention more broadly.
- **KPI 6** (Number of women recruited against service targets), **KPI 7** (Completion rates for initial-entry training are equal between women and men), and **KPI 8** (Women are retained in the recruiting pipeline at a similar rate to men) will be combined into a KPI focusing on experiences related to entry into the ADF. These three KPI have overlapping topics and it will be more insightful to discuss them together.
- **KPI 11** (No significant difference in cultural reporting between women and men) and **KPI 13** (Women feel equally included in the ADF) will be combined to focus on women's experiences in the workplace and cultural reporting.

KPI 1: Progress towards women's representation targets

Key Findings for KPI 1

- Women's participation in the Permanent ADF in 2023-24:
 - ADF – 20.7% (11,847 women out of a total permanent force headcount of 57,222)
 - Navy – 24.1% (3,554 women)
 - Army – 15.3% (4,169 women)
 - Air Force – 27.0% (4,124 women)
- Participation targets are set for 2030. These are 25% for the ADF, 28% for Navy, 18% for Army, and 35% for Air Force.
- Women are represented in larger percentages at Junior ranks when compared to Senior Officers, and this trend is the same for Other Ranks. It will take time to change this as women progress in their careers and promote to Senior ranks.

Women's Representation in 2023-24

In 2023-24, the Permanent ADF reached a participation rate for women of 20.7% which was a 0.3 percentage point increase on the previous year (Figure 1, Figure 2). The percentage of women in the ADF has increased each year for the past five years, with a total increase of 2.5 percentage points since 2019-2020. In 2023-24, Navy reached 24.1% women (increase of 0.1 percentage point since 2022-23), Army maintained a participation percentage of 15.3% women, and Air Force reached 27.0% women (increase of 0.4 percentage points since 2022-23).



Figure 1 Women's representation in the permanent ADF and Services in 2023-24⁶

Note: This includes only SERCAT 7 & 6 (permanent force), and excludes SERVOP G (Gap Year).

⁶ Based on the Defence Monthly Workforce Report, July 2024, produced by Directorate of Workforce Analytics, accessible on the Defence Intranet.

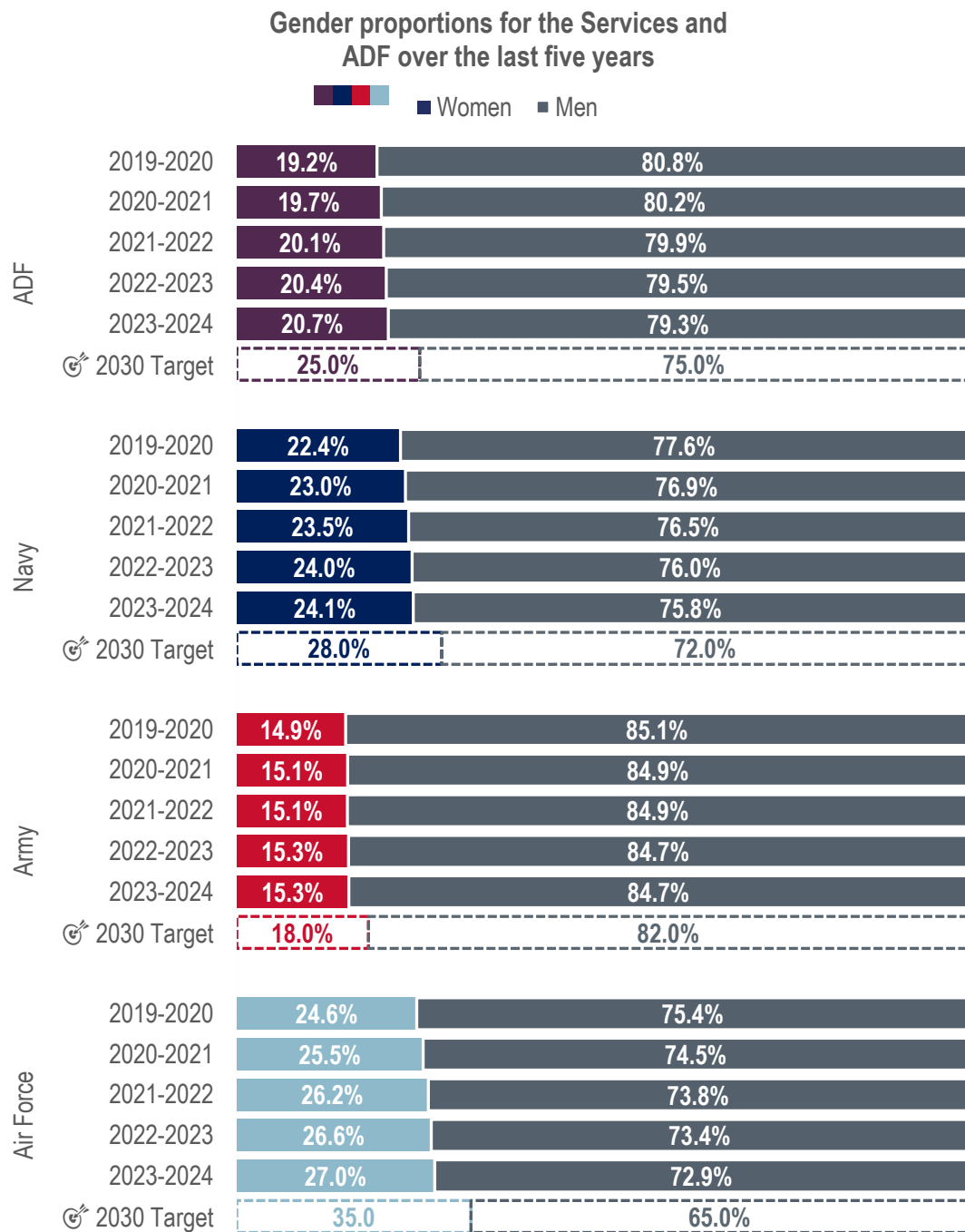


Figure 2 Gender percentages for the Services and Permanent ADF over the past five years⁷

Note: This includes only SERCAT 7 & 6 (permanent force), and excludes SERVOP G (Gap Year). Over the past five years, the ADF has had an increasing number of non-binary members. However due to being less than 0.1% of the overall ADF each year they have not been included in the above graph.

⁷ Data is from the Defence Monthly Workforce Report, July 2024, produced by Directorate of Workforce Analytics, accessible on the Defence Intranet.

2030 Participation Targets

Defence had previously set targets for women's representation in the permanent Australian Defence Force to be achieved by 2023. These were set at 15 per cent for Army, and 25 per cent for both Navy and Air Force. By 2023, Army and Air Force had achieved these targets and Navy was one percentage point below target.

In 2024, women's participation targets for the Services and ADF permanent forces were reset to a common endpoint of 2030 (Figure 2). The target for the permanent ADF is 25%, and the Services agreed to the following targets: 28% for Navy, 18% for Army, and 35% for Air Force.

Figure 2 shows the changes to women's participation over the past five years, and although there have been increases these are typically less than half a percentage point each year. On this trajectory it will be difficult to meet the new targets in the timeframe. In the next six years, the ADF will need to achieve an increase of 4.3 percentage points for women's participation, Navy 3.9 percentage point increase, Army increase by 2.7 percentage points, and Air Force increase 8 percentage points. These are much larger increases than have been achieved in the past five years. To achieve the growth to support these targets, it will be important to identify areas/actions that could produce larger changes.

Women in the Reserves

Women are participating in the ADF Reserves at a lower percentage overall compared to the ADF permanent force. For Navy and Army the percentages of women in the Reserve Force are similar to the permanent force, but for Air Force the percentage of women is 4.1 percentage points lower. For Army, the proportion of reserve women in 2023-24 is 7.6 percentage points higher than the permanent force. This higher number of women in the Army reserve force perform very important functions as part of the contingent workforce.

Table 1 Reserve Force (SERCAT 5, 4, 3 and SERVOP C)

	2022-23		2023-24	
Service	Women	Men	Women	Men
Navy	23.4%	76.5%	24.0%	75.9%
Army	16.2%	83.8%	16.1%	83.9%
Air Force	22.3%	77.7%	22.9%	77.1%
Total ADF	18.5%	81.5%	18.6%	81.4%

Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to small percentages (<1%) of non-binary members

International Comparisons for Women's Participation

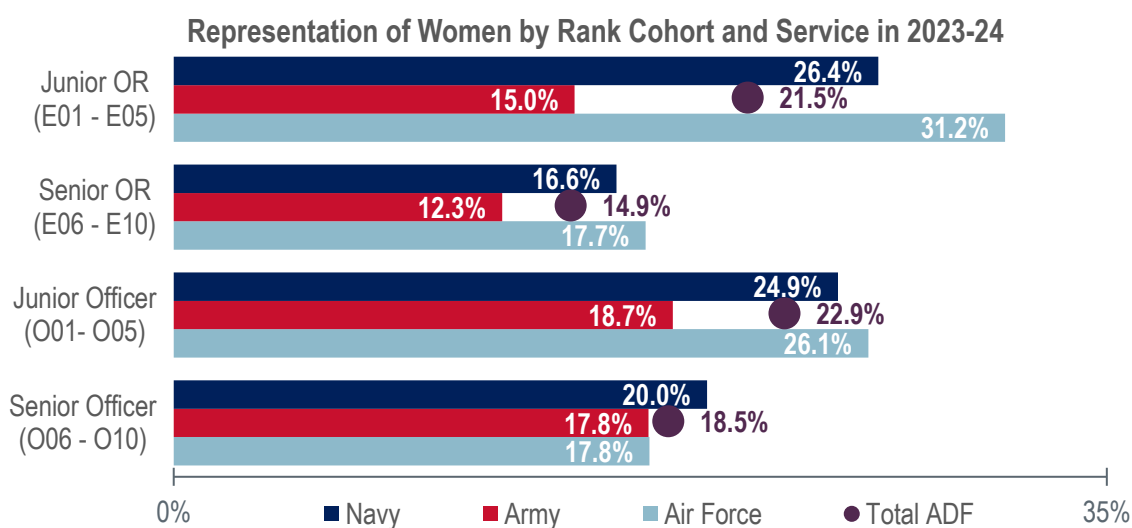
Australia is performing above the UK, Canada, and the US for women's participation across their defence forces. New Zealand has a similar percentage for women's participation, with higher numbers in Navy, lower percentage for Air Force, and similar percentages for Army. The US have the largest percentage of women in their Army of the Five Eyes nations. Exploring this could be useful for understanding the roles and structures available to women in the US Army to inform how future Australian efforts are prioritised.

Table 2 Women's Participation in Five Eyes militaries (Permanent Forces)

	2023/2024				
	AU	NZ ⁸	UK ⁹	CAN ¹⁰	US ¹¹
Total Permanent Force	20.7%	20.2%	11.7%	16.1%	16.0%
Total Reserve Force	18.6%	18.6%	15.9%	17.4%	-
Navy	24.1%	27.4%	10.9%	20.7%	21.1%
Army	15.3%	14.7%	10.4%	13.9%	21.7%
Air Force	27.0%	23.7%	16.0%	20.3%	17.9%

Rank Cohort Representation

To increase women's participation in the ADF, it is important to ensure women are represented at senior ranks and not just the junior levels. Women's progression into senior ranks is a function of opportunities and promotion decisions, but also retention and length of service because it takes time to progress through ranks (see KPI 5 for gendered differences). Figure 3 shows the percentage of women in Officer and Other Ranks (OR) split into Senior and Junior cohorts.¹² Women are larger percentages of the Junior Officer and OR cohorts compared to Senior Officer and OR respectively. Army's representation for women at the Senior Officer level (17.8%) and is close to the 2030 Army women's participation rate of 18% and is above the participation rate for the Junior Officers (18.7%).

Figure 3 Representation of Women by Rank Cohort and Service in 2023-24¹³

Note: This is for the permanent force (SERCAT 7 and 6) and excludes Gap Year members.

⁸ <https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/nzdf/who-we-are/our-people-structure-and-leadership/> (at 08/07/2024, accessed 03/09/2024)

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-biannual-diversity-statistics-april-2024/uk-armed-forces-biannual-diversity-statistics-april-2024> (at 01/04/2024, accessed 03/09/2024)

¹⁰ As of May 2023 <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-national-defence/services/women-in-the-forces/statistics.htm>

¹¹ As at June 2024, based on data from <https://dwp.dmdc.osd.mil/dwp/app/dod-data-reports/workforce-reports>

¹² Rank cohorts grouping based on Defence Workforce Reports produced by Directorate of Workforce Analytics, accessible on the Defence Intranet.

¹³ Data from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence.

Differences between women's participation in Junior and Senior cohorts could be a structural issue, but it could also be attributed to by higher participation of women in recent intakes increasing the percentage of women in junior ranks. It takes time for ADF members to progress through to the Senior ranks and therefore efforts to increase the percentage of women in even the last decade will still take time to be reflected in Senior ranks.

As shown in Figure 4, women are a very small percentage of the Army Combat population. Army senior officers sit outside the Army combat category and are therefore not included in this figure.

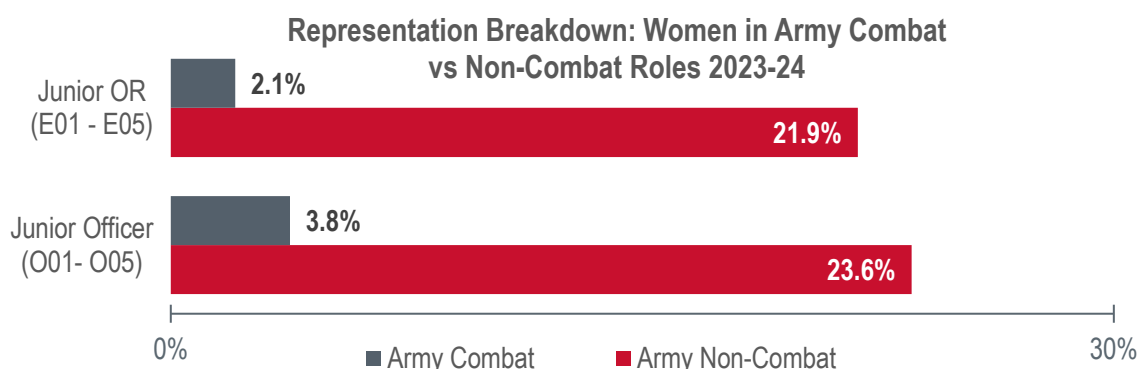


Figure 4 Comparison of Women in Army Combat and Non-Combat Roles by Rank Cohort¹⁴

Five Year Trends for Women's Rank Cohort Participation

Navy's percentages have remained relatively stable over the past five years, with small increases in the percentage of women in all cohorts except the newly enlisted cohort (E0 and O0) which have fluctuations (Table 3). As these E0 and O0 cohorts with larger percentages of women from 2019 onwards progress through the ranks, it would be reasonable to expect increases at the Senior ranks.

Table 3 Navy Women's Participation by Rank Cohort since 2019-2020¹⁵

	Navy				
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
E0	28.0%	28.3%	24.0%	18.1%	24.0%
Junior OR (E1 - E5)	24.5%	25.4%	25.9%	25.2%	26.4%
Senior OR (E6 +)	15.0%	15.2%	15.7%	13.7%	16.6%
O0	29.3%	30.2%	29.9%	29.4%	28.0%
Junior Officer < O5	22.1%	22.9%	23.8%	25.3%	24.9%
Senior Officer O6 +	16.4%	15.5%	16.3%	19.1%	20.0%

As shown in Table 4, similar to the other Services, Army has had fluctuations in the E0 and O0 cohorts and has had an overall decrease from 2019-2020 to 2023-24. This suggests that there is a decreasing percentage of women in each year's recruited population. The flow on effect from this will potentially

¹⁴ Data from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence, includes the permanent force (SERCAT 7 and 6), and excludes Gap Year members.

¹⁵ Data from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence, includes the permanent force (SERCAT 7 and 6), and excludes Gap Year members.

eventuate in a decreased percentage of women at the Senior ranks but will also pose challenges for Army's ability to meet the 2030 participation targets (see KPI 1).

Table 4 Army Women's Participation by Rank Cohort since 2019-2020¹⁶

	Army				
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
E0	22.3%	16.4%	14.5%	14.8%	12.9%
Junior OR (E1 - E5)	14.7%	15.1%	15.2%	14.8%	15.0%
Senior OR (E6 +)	10.3%	10.7%	10.8%	10.2%	12.3%
O0	20.5%	19.4%	19.5%	18.1%	15.9%
Junior Officer < O5	17.8%	18.1%	18.2%	19.1%	18.7%
Senior Officer O6 +	14.7%	16.5%	15.4%	15.5%	17.8%

Air Force has achieved strong percentages of women in their E0 and O0 cohorts overall, with some fluctuation each year. The percentage of women in the E0 cohort for 2019-20 was much larger than has been achieved in any year since and it would potentially be useful to investigate what factors could have driven such a high percentage that year. The percentages are still low for reaching the 2030 target of Air Force being 35% women, but demonstrate progress.

Table 5 Air Force Women's Participation by Rank Cohort since 2019-2020¹⁷

	Air Force				
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
E0	40.0%	28.2%	30.5%	33.0%	35.6%
Junior OR (E1 - E5)	28.4%	30.2%	29.9%	28.9%	31.2%
Senior OR (E6+)	15.9%	16.2%	17.6%	15.6%	17.7%
O0	35.7%	32.9%	30.1%	28.9%	32.6%
Junior Officer (< O5)	24.1%	24.5%	24.8%	25.9%	26.1%
Senior Officer (O6+)	15.3%	16.0%	16.3%	21.8%	17.8%

Net Flow

This is the difference between enlistments and separations. A positive number indicates that the total number of enlistments for the category was greater than the separations. A negative number indicates that the total number of separations for the category was greater than the number of enlistments. For the ADF to grow, there needs to be a positive number. To increase the percentage of women in the ADF the number of women joining needs to be much higher than men or the number of men leaving

¹⁶ Data from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence, includes the permanent force (SERCAT 7 and 6), and excludes Gap Year members.

¹⁷ Data from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence, includes the permanent force (SERCAT 7 and 6), and excludes Gap Year members.

needs to be much higher than women. Either option (or both) will shift the balance but the latter is undesirable for increasing the size of the ADF.

Net flow for Officer women has been positive for the past five years, and in 2023-24 was positive for men and women for the first time in few years. In comparison, the net flow for men and women Other Rank members has been negative for the past three years. For Other Ranks men the outflow is less negative this year compared to the year prior, but the opposite has occurred for women in Other Ranks. Negative numbers are concerning, because strong positive numbers are necessary to grow the ADF to the strength outlined in the National Defence Strategy.

Table 6 Net Flow for Officers and Other Ranks¹⁸

Year	Net Flow - Officers		Net Flow - Other Ranks	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
2019-20	+129	+129	+397	+382
2020-21	+111	+212	+301	+1,114
2021-22	+21	-185	-103	-1,156
2022-23	+32	-112	-11	-769
2023-24	+90	+99	-190	-356

Note: This is the permanent force, including both the trained and training force, enlisted from all sources (including prior service enlistments).

¹⁸ Data from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence

KPI 2: Progress towards reaching critical mass in identified employment categories

Key Findings for KPI 2

- Participation in most workforce segments has been stable with only minor increases and decreases.
- There are Service differences for participation in workforce segments and this affects how increasing women's participation will need to be addressed.
- As of 2023-24:
 - Navy has achieved critical mass in Logistics, Intelligence, Enterprise & Command Support, Communications & Cyber, and Health.
 - Air Force has achieved critical mass in Logistics, Intelligence, Enterprise & Command Support, Health, and Combat & Security.
 - Army has achieved critical mass in Enterprise & Command Support, and Health.

Critical mass is the participation threshold where, when reached, the minority group is able to change the group culture, form alliances necessary to significantly impact the whole group, influence the outcome of high-level-decision making, and drive a chain reaction required for the majority to adopt the changes.¹⁹ This is believed to improve the institution, open up opportunities for women, and enhance the organisation's culture.

In the Women in the ADF Report's KPI 2 (Progress towards reaching critical mass in identified employment categories), critical mass is achieved at a 25% participation rate. This is an adjusted figure to reflect the operational context of the ADF, as the threshold is typically 30%. Critical mass targets have not been set by any Service, instead it is used as a guide to examine occupational segregation of the eight workforce segments in the ADF. Workforce segments vary in composition across the Services, containing different roles and populations. This does present some challenge in comparisons between the Services.

For the ADF overall, four workforce segments have reached critical mass – Logistics, Intelligence, Enterprise & Command Support, and Health (Figure 5). Army has achieved critical mass for the latter two but is closer to reaching critical mass for Intelligence and Logistics. Air Force has additionally reached critical mass in Combat and Security, whilst Navy has reached critical mass for Communications and Cyber.

At the end of the 2023/24 financial year, half (51%) of all ADF women in the Combat and Security segment were in the Navy, with 29% in Army, and 20% in Air Force. Within Combat and Security, there are 16 Navy categories, 16 Army categories, and 9 Air Force categories. The roles performed by these employment categories differ greatly, for example Army's roles include Artillery, Infantry, Combat Engineers, and Rifleman. Rifleman is the largest job category in Army and Defence overall, but has not been as popular as other combat roles open to women at the same time, growing to just 1.1% representation. Given the size of the Rifleman category and its relatively small representation of women, this has a substantial impact on the statistics for women's participation in Army and for the Combat and Security segment. Larger Army Combat and Security roles such as Rifleman or Infantry Officer (1.1% women) may be more challenging to recruit women into and may appeal less to women compared to the Combat and Security roles for Navy and Air Force.

Services may have different categories and occupations within each Workforce Segment. For example, Navy has their Electronic Warfare role under the Communications and Cyber segment

¹⁹ Dahlerup D. The Story of the Theory of Critical Mass. *Politics & Gender*. 2006;2(4):511-522. doi:10.1017/S1743923X0624114X

whereas it sits under Intelligence for Army. These segments may also have different personnel levels and therefore impact the overall Service participation rates differently. This means that although the Services are all striving for critical mass in all workforce segments, different actions may be necessary to achieve this. For Army, the Combat and Security Segment comprises 38% of the total workforce and includes employment categories such as Infantry and Artillery. By contrast RAAF Combat and Security Segment is 9% of the workforce and includes Military Police and Ground Defence.

Defence's ability to increase participation in specific workforce segments is heavily affected by the attractiveness of employment in those industries or occupations. Societal employment and educational trends impact women's participation in industry overall and also in Defence. For example, Australian government and social initiatives to increase girls and women in STEM will have benefits for Defence.

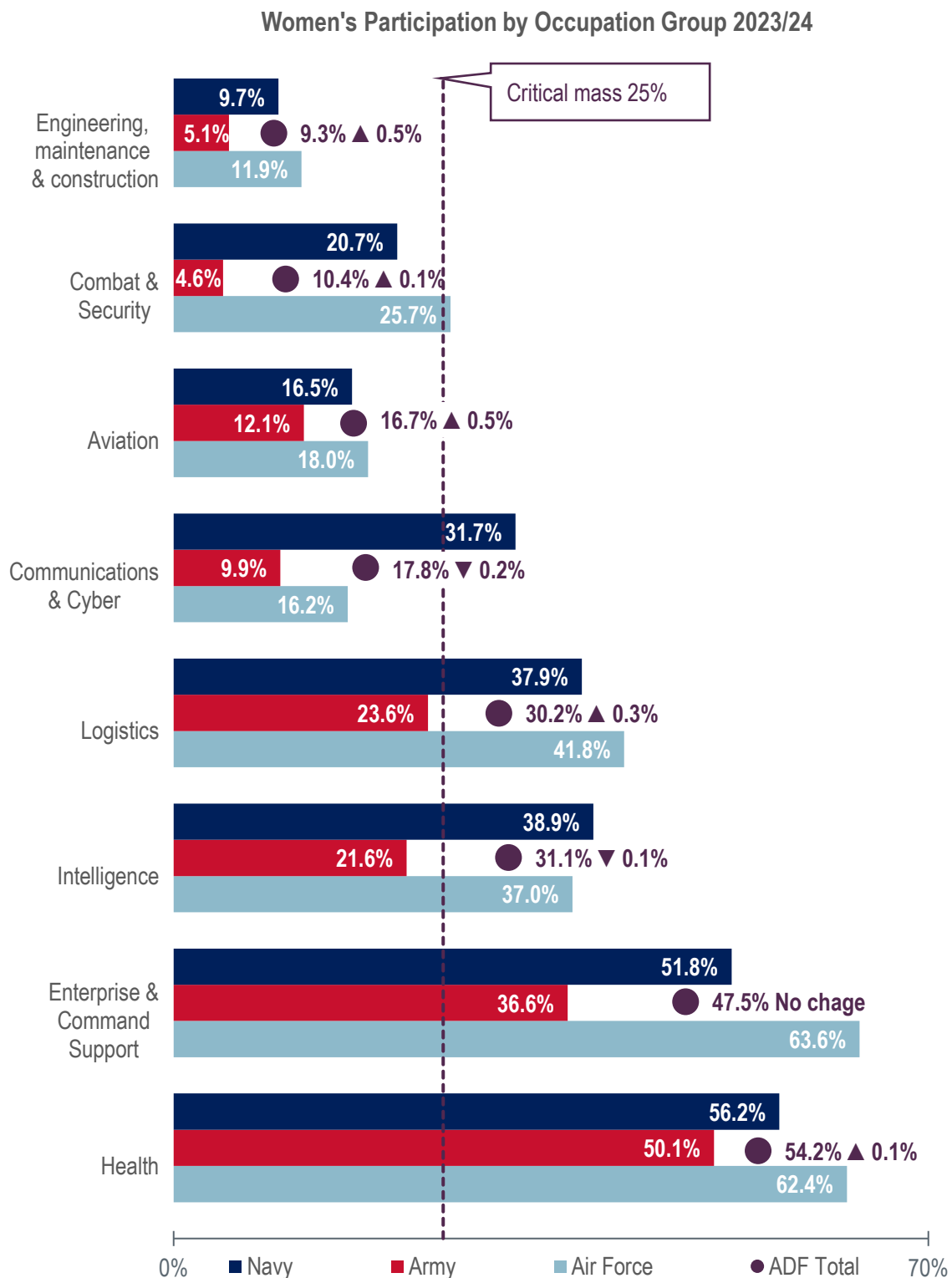


Figure 5 Women's Participation by Workforce Segment 2023-24

Data on women's participation by workforce segment is from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence. This is for the permanent force (SERCAT 7 and 6).

Women's participation in the Health workforce segment has been stable overall, with an increase for Navy over the past five years (Table 10). Enterprise & Command Support participation has been stable overall (Table 7). It is interesting that women's participation in this category for Army is much smaller than Air Force and Navy. This difference could be further explored to identify factors limiting women's participation in Army and potential opportunities for change. Army has seen a small decrease in women's participation for intelligence whereas Air Force has had an increase overall (Table 8). Women's participation in Logistics has been stable overall for the past five years with a very small increase (Table 9).

Table 7 Women's Participation in the Enterprise & Command Support Workforce Segment for last five years

	Enterprise & Command Support			
	Navy	Army	Air Force	ADF Total
2019-20	50.4%	35.4%	61.6	45.4%
2020-21	51.0%	35.2%	61.6	45.7%
2021-22	52.2%	35.9%	62.9	46.8%
2022-23	53.6%	36.6%	62.9	47.5%
2023-24	51.8%	36.6%	63.6	47.5%

Table 8 Women's Participation in the Intelligence Workforce Segment for last five years

	Intelligence			
	Navy	Army	Air Force	ADF Total
2019-20	36.1%	23.6%	31.3%	29.2%
2020-21	39.7%	22.1%	37.8%	31.6%
2021-22	40.6%	22.5%	37.9%	32.0%
2022-23	40.3%	21.5%	36.9%	31.2%
2023-24	38.9%	21.6%	37.0%	31.1%

Table 9 Women's Participation in the Logistics Workforce Segment for last five years

	Logistics			
	Navy	Army	Air Force	ADF Total
2019-20	36.6%	22.7%	39.3%	28.0%
2020-21	37.4%	22.9%	40.2%	28.7%
2021-22	37.2%	23.1%	41.6%	29.3%
2022-23	37.9%	23.6%	41.7%	29.9%
2023-24	37.9%	23.6%	41.8%	30.2%

Table 10 Women's Participation in the Health Workforce Segment for last five years

	Health			
	Navy	Army	Air Force	ADF Total
2019-20	50.6%	50.5%	60.2%	52.5%
2020-21	52.0%	50.5%	59.7%	52.7%
2021-22	53.4%	50.3%	60.4%	53.1%
2022-23	55.4%	50.8%	61.2%	54.1%
2023-24	56.2%	50.1%	62.4%	54.2%

Navy and Army have seen a small decrease in women's participation in the Communications & Cyber workforce segment while Air Force has had an increase overall but a decrease in the past year. As with a few other segments, particularly Enterprise & Command Support, there are large differences in the percentage of women in this segment between Services that might be worth further investigation.

Table 7 Women's Participation in the Aviation Workforce Segment for last five years

	Aviation			
	Navy	Army	Air Force	ADF Total
2019-20	16.9%	11.5%	17.5%	16.0%
2020-21	16.0%	11.6%	17.1%	15.8%
2021-22	15.5%	11.3%	17.6%	16.0%
2022-23	15.9%	11.2%	17.8%	16.2%
2023-24	16.5%	12.1%	18.0%	16.7%

Table 8 Women's Participation in the Communications & Cyber Workforce Segment for last five years

	Communications & Cyber			
	Navy	Army	Air Force	ADF Total
2019-20	33.7%	11.2%	12.6%	18.4%
2020-21	31.6%	10.2%	14.2%	17.2%
2021-22	31.2%	9.8%	17.3%	17.6%
2022-23	32.0%	9.7%	17.5%	18.0%
2023-24	31.7%	9.9%	16.2%	17.8%

There have been small increases in women's participation in the Engineering, Maintenance & Construction segment over the past five years.

Table 9 Women's Participation in the Combat & Security Workforce Segment for last five years

	Combat & Security			
	Navy	Army	Air Force	ADF Total
2019-20	20.2%	3.9%	21.5%	9.4%
2020-21	20.6%	4.5%	22.1%	10.1%
2021-22	20.8%	4.4%	22.6%	10.2%
2022-23	20.6%	4.6%	22.9%	10.2%
2023-24	20.7%	4.6%	25.7%	10.4%

Table 10 Women's Participation in the Engineering, Maintenance & Construction Workforce Segment for last five years

	Engineering, Maintenance & Construction			
	Navy	Army	Air Force	ADF Total
2019-20	8.1%	4.2%	9.0%	7.3%
2020-21	8.7%	4.5%	9.8%	7.9%
2021-22	8.9%	4.5%	10.2%	8.1%
2022-23	9.4%	4.9%	11.1%	8.8%
2023-24	9.7%	5.1%	11.9%	9.3%

Carrying Capacity

The term 'carrying capacity' can be understood as the steady state for women's participation under fixed factors. With no changes to policy or changes to factors affecting participation, the participation rate for women would stabilise at the carrying capacity or steady state. As such, carrying capacity is a reflection of the current state and is a point in time measurement. Significant changes to policy, social conditions, and strategic context may change the available population that is suitable for the ADF and propensity to serve, which would then shift carrying capacity.

The carrying capacity of segments may not be shiftable due to external factors limiting participation. The ADF's ability to attract and recruit women is heavily affected by demand for women in other industries/occupations combined with the availability of women with a propensity and eligibility to join. Efforts could be prioritised toward segments where increases in women's participation could be driven by policy changes, such as Intelligence or Logistics.

The force structure drives the roles in the ADF that women can access. For example, the removal of gender restrictions on combat roles. Women's inclination towards roles and workforce segments must also be acknowledged. The greater the percentage of roles that are of interest to women, the higher the carrying capacity or steady state. The headcount of these roles is also important, because if the numerically largest segments are not appealing to women then the ADF will struggle to increase overall participation percentages.

Currently, participation targets are set at a Service-level but it may be beneficial to consider workforce segments individually. Workforce categories can be mapped against the expected potential impact that can be achieved with intervention and the likely effort required to do so. For segments that are identified as having reached their target or carrying capacity and that require changes that would not result in commensurate increases, Defence may choose to take a non-intervention approach. Defence could then focus on pursuing segments where greater impact is possible.

Next Steps

The exact percentage for critical mass remains debated with figures for the threshold ranging from 20% to 35%. Next year's report will include a focus on whether 25% should continue to be Defence's critical mass target moving forward. It will also discuss the achievability of a 25% participation target for select workforce segments.

KPI 3: Increased acceptance of flexible work

Key Findings for KPI 3

- A low percentage of 'formalised' FWA/FSA are reflected in HR data due to low use of the "ADF Application for Flexible Work Form". In the Defence Census, members indicated much higher rates of FWA/FSA than the data provided from the form would suggest.
- Informal flexible work arrangements are more common than formal flexible arrangements in Navy and Army, but not Air Force. Informal arrangements may provide less certainty or stability.
- There are Service differences for use and perceptions of flexible arrangements that may be reducing uptake.
- A larger percentage of women had positive perceptions of FWA than men.
- Only half of ADF members indicated feeling supported by their unit to use FWA, and a third of men and women felt that their career progression would be negatively impacted if they were to do so. This suggests there are still barriers to accessing FWA.
- The use and availability of flexible work and service arrangements can have a positive impact on intention to remain in the ADF, particularly for women.

Use of Flexible Work and Service Arrangements

Formal flexible work arrangements (FWA) and flexible service arrangements (FSA) are those that have been documented using the required form and as such does not include any informal or ad hoc arrangements.²⁰ This also does not include purchased leave, which may be used as an alternative to flexible service arrangements. SERCAT 6 is included with FSA and allows members of the permanent force to render a pattern of service other than full-time. Arrangements could be 1 to 9 days per fortnight, certain weeks per month, particular months each year, or a custom arrangement. SERCAT 6 members are subject to the same service obligations at SERCAT 7 members.

The formal flexible work and service arrangements discussed in this section include:

- Variable work hours,
- Home-located work,
- Alternative location work,
- Remote overseas work,
- Part-time Leave Without Pay (LWOP)²¹, and
- Service Category (SERCAT) 6.

The percentage of members who are accessing formal flexible arrangements has remained broadly stable since last year, with changes typically of less than percentage point (Figure 6). The largest decrease was for Navy men where the percentage of members accessing flexible arrangements decreased by a percentage point.

²⁰ Formal Flexible Work and Service Arrangement data is from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence. These arrangements were applied for using the ADF Application for Flexible Work Form (AE406). Numbers are based on permanent and continuous full-time service trained members.

²¹ Part-time LWOP was not indicated as used by any members in 2023-24, however small numbers did use this option in 2022-23.

Air Force women are the group with the largest percentage for uptake of formal flexible arrangements overall (Figure 6). As Air Force men have a larger percentage compared to Navy and Army men for uptake of formal flexible arrangements there may be a structural or cultural factor in Air Force supporting formalisation of flexible arrangements.

In 2023-24, variable work hours was the most popular formal flexible arrangement with 5.1% of ADF women accessing this arrangement compared to 2.0% of men. There were some groups with other preferences. For example, alternative location work was the most used FWA for Navy Officers, and home-located work was the most used arrangement for Army Officers. SERCAT 6 was only used by very small percentages of members.

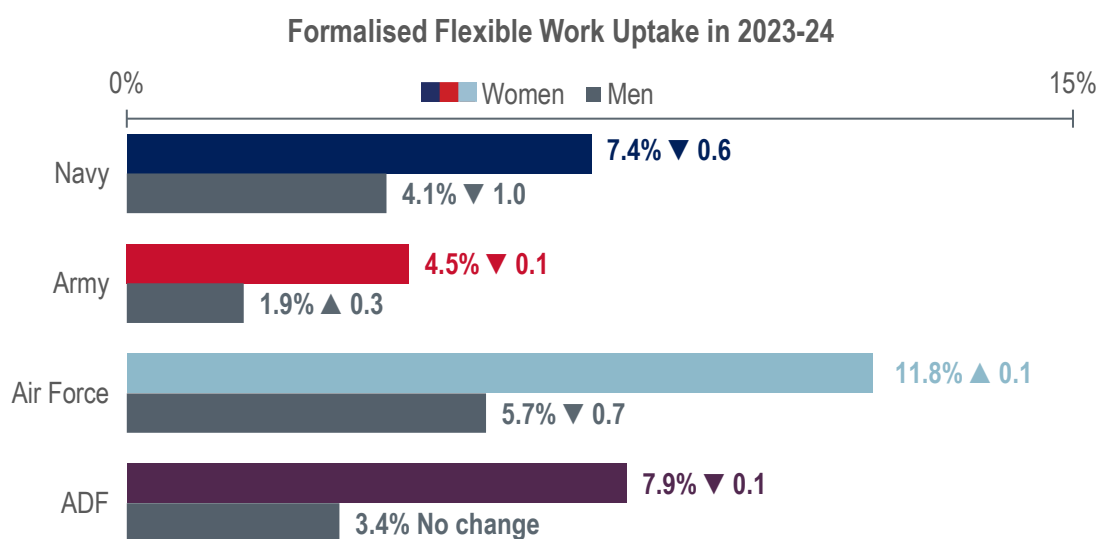


Figure 6 Formalised Flexible Work Uptake in 2023-24 with Change Compared to 2022-23

Table 11 Use of Formal FWA/FSA for Navy in 2023-24

Navy						
	Officer Women	Officers Men	OR Women	OR Men	Total Women	Total Men
Variable work hours	4.41%	2.28%	4.14%	2.23%	4.22%	2.25%
Home-located work	3.31%	1.92%	1.70%	1.25%	2.14%	1.43%
Alternative location work	5.15%	2.48%	2.49%	1.47%	3.21%	1.74%
SERCAT 6	0.25%	0.08%	0.41%	0.03%	0.37%	0.04%
Overall²²	10.05%	5.17%	6.35%	3.73%	7.36%	4.12%

²² As members may use multiple forms of FWA/FSA, the overall percentage is not a sum of the sub-types.

Table 12 Use of Formal FWA/FSA for Army in 2023-24

Army						
	Officer Women	Officers Men	OR Women	OR Men	Total Women	Total Men
Variable work hours	2.69%	1.26%	2.18%	0.68%	2.31%	0.80%
Home-located work	3.87%	1.66%	1.33%	0.63%	1.98%	0.85%
Alternative location work	3.33%	1.42%	0.66%	0.41%	1.35%	0.63%
SERCAT 6	1.18%	0.19%	0.15%	0.01%	0.41%	0.05%
Overall	8.17%	3.48%	3.21%	1.40%	4.48%	1.85%

Table 13 Use of Formal FWA/FSA for Air Force in 2023-24

Air Force						
	Officer Women	Officers Men	OR Women	OR Men	Total Women	Total Men
Variable work hours	7.80%	3.02%	9.01%	4.54%	8.59%	3.97%
Home-located work	5.83%	2.16%	3.69%	1.58%	4.43%	1.80%
Alternative location work	4.96%	1.57%	2.18%	1.04%	3.15%	1.24%
SERCAT 6	3.15%	0.24%	1.26%	0.11%	1.92%	0.16%
Overall	12.91%	5.32%	11.24%	5.92%	11.82%	5.69%

Table 14 Use of Formal FWA/FSA for ADF in 2023-24

ADF Total						
	Officer Women	Officers Men	OR Women	OR Men	Total Women	Total Men
Variable work hours	5.31%	2.13%	5.01%	1.89%	5.09%	1.95%
Home-located work	4.54%	1.90%	2.21%	0.98%	2.90%	1.23%
Alternative location work	4.51%	1.73%	1.71%	0.80%	2.53%	1.05%
SERCAT 6	1.76%	0.18%	0.59%	0.04%	0.93%	0.08%
Overall	10.68%	4.53%	6.78%	2.94%	7.92%	3.37%

Army has low use of formalised FWA, although women Army Officers use formalised FWA at a larger percentage than the other Army groups and a level comparable to the other Services (Figure 7). The nature of Army work in particular is often challenging for flexible work arrangements, for example mechanical work and maintenance, vehicle crewing, and field exercises cannot be done remotely. Army officers are over-represented in headquarters and office jobs and therefore more able to use FWA. Across the Services, Other Ranks use formalised FWA at a lower percentage than Officers. This may be because of the nature of work undertaken by Other Ranks particularly outside of the Enterprise and Command Support Segment.

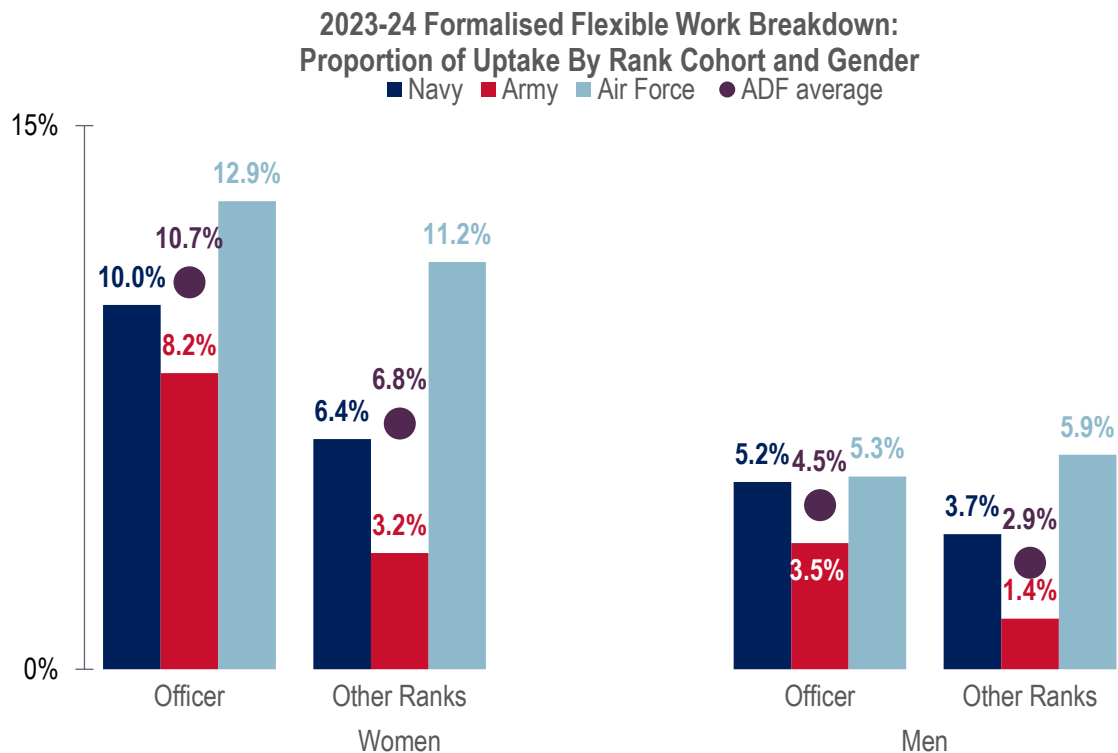


Figure 7 2023-24 Formalised Flexible Work Breakdown: Percentage of Uptake By Rank Cohort and Gender²³

Use of formalised FWA has been fairly stable over the past five years with a small uptick in 2021-22 that could be linked to COVID-19 and a change in societal expectations around flexible work.

Table 15 Formalised Flexible Work arrangements by Rank Cohort for the past five years²⁴

	Officers		Other Ranks		Overall	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
2019-20	8.5%	3.6%	6.2%	2.5%	6.8%	2.8%
2020-21	9.2%	4.5%	5.9%	2.6%	6.8%	3.1%
2021-22	10.2%	4.6%	6.8%	2.5%	7.8%	3.0%
2022-23	10.1%	4.9%	7.2%	2.9%	8.0%	3.4%
2023-24	10.7%	4.5%	6.8%	2.9%	7.9%	3.4%

²³ Data from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence

²⁴ Data from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence

Lived Experience

Flexible work arrangements are actively discouraged in some workplaces but this is not captured in official statistics as personnel feel submitting a formal application that they know will be denied will have negative impacts on their performance reporting and thus career. [...]. – Air Force Senior Officer, woman, aged 40-44 years old²⁵

When comparing the formalised flexible arrangement percentages with those from the Defence Census results, the percentage of ADF members using FWA is higher (Table 20). This could be due to members 'formalising' their arrangements in a way other than the ADF Application for Flexible Work Form (AE406). However, this means that Defence may not have comprehensible visibility of the uptake of these arrangements and this can undermine the understanding of working patterns for the ADF workforce.

Table 16 2023 Defence Census results for 'In the last 12 months, have you applied for or used any flexible work arrangements, either formally (i.e. in writing) or informally (i.e. verbally)?²⁶

	Formal		Informal	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
ADF	14%	7%	13%	11%
Navy	15%	9%	13%	10%
Army	9%	4%	11%	7%
Air Force	19%	11%	14%	13%

Using an informal arrangement may also make the FWA less stable for members and limit the continuity when command changes or a member is posted. This can contribute to feelings of uncertainty. While it is important the FWA reflect the conditions of the workplace and the nature of the work undertaken, members should be able to consistently access FWA across the organisation.

Lived Experience

Some work areas have an aversion to WFH to allow for flexibility and work life balance as well as mental health support. It's also perceived as an inconvenience to drop children at school and pick up, or WFH if they are sick but work can still be achieved. This is quite frustrating and does not allow for good morale and a positive work environment. – Army Warrant Officer/Senior NCO, woman, aged 40-44 years old

²⁵ All quotes are from the Defence Census 2023.

²⁶ Data is from Defence Census 2023.

One third of men (34%) and just under half of women (45%) indicated on the 2023 Defence Census that they had worked from home at least one day per week in the past 12 months (Figure 8).

Average number of days worked from home

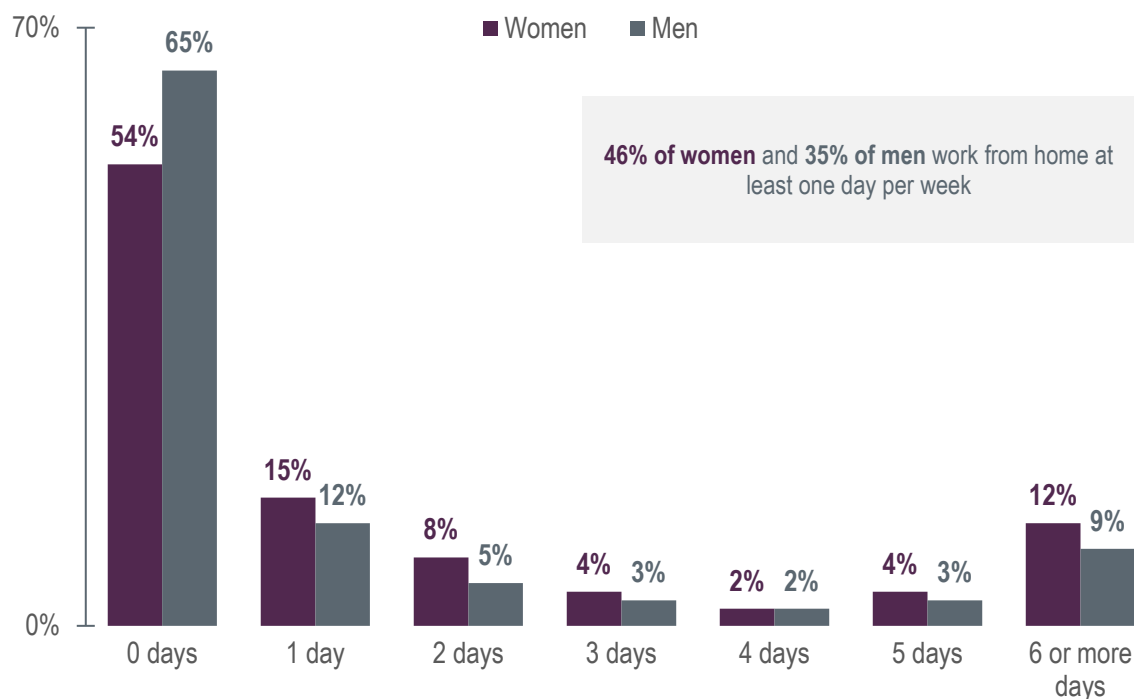


Figure 8 Average number of days worked from home for ADF members²⁷

Overall, women's perceptions of flexible work arrangements (FWA) and flexible service arrangements (FSA) were more positive than men's in 2023-24 (Figure 9). These positive perceptions are likely driving the larger percentage of women in the ADF who use formalised flexible work and service arrangements.

Men and women feel similarly supported by their unit to use FWA. However, only around half of all members indicated feeling supported. Around a third of men and women felt that their career progression would be negatively impacted if they were to access flexible service or work arrangements. This was notably higher for Army than other Services and this is potentially reflected in the lower use of formal FWA for Army. Ideally, all members would feel that FWA or FSA would be supported where possible. There are areas of Defence that might find certain forms of FWA hard to accommodate but members should feel supported to find suitable FWA where possible.

There have been some changes in perceptions of flexible work and service arrangements since last year. There was an increase in the percentage of men and women who had positive perceptions regarding flexible service arrangements offering opportunities to develop more diverse skills.

Uptake of flexible work arrangements is likely limited by negative perceptions of unit support, impact on career progression, nature of the individual's role or work, posting location, and other social or structural factors. This is important for Defence to address, because the ability to use FWA and FSA have a positive impact on intention to remain in the ADF. It is particularly a retention issue for women. FSA and the ability to work less than full-time positively influence women's decisions to stay and access to different SERCATs help women's work-life balance. There was a significant difference when

²⁷ Data from Defence Census 2023.

comparing men and women's response percentages. In 2023-24, the percentage of women who agreed that FSA positively influenced their decision to stay in their respective Service increased by 6 percentage points compared to the year prior. Air Force had the largest increase at 10 percentage points, with Navy increasing by 3 percentage points and Army by 4 percentage points.

Lived Experience

I am currently posted to Canberra and live on base for 4 days of the working week and return home to work 1 day per week to enable me to connect with my family – Air Force Junior Officer, woman, 50-54 years old

FWA's and AWL have been quite rewarding in being able to fulfil my roles and maintain care for my children – Navy Warrant Officers/Senior NCO, woman, 30-44 years old

My retention in defence since having children has completely come down to the good fortune of having supportive CoC. I believe promotional courses should include greater discussion on using FWAs, SERCAT 6 and family minded leadership as a way to retain people in defence, particularly women. – Army Junior Officer, woman, aged 40-44 years old

I think we have come a long way to provide more flexibility in how people serve and how, culturally, we accept that is the case. I feel like I am constantly choosing between being a good mum, wife, daughter, sister and friend and being a good employee and leader. - Navy Senior Officer, woman, 35-39 years old

In the 2023 Defence Census, the most commonly selected reason for applying for Flexible Work Arrangements was to assist with caring for children. Flexible work arrangements help support members with life-work balance and to spend time with their families. Increasing the uptake of FWA/FWS by men and women could reduce the gendered nature of caring responsibilities and likely support increased retention.

Positive Perceptions of Benefits Flexible Work and Service Arrangements in 2023-24

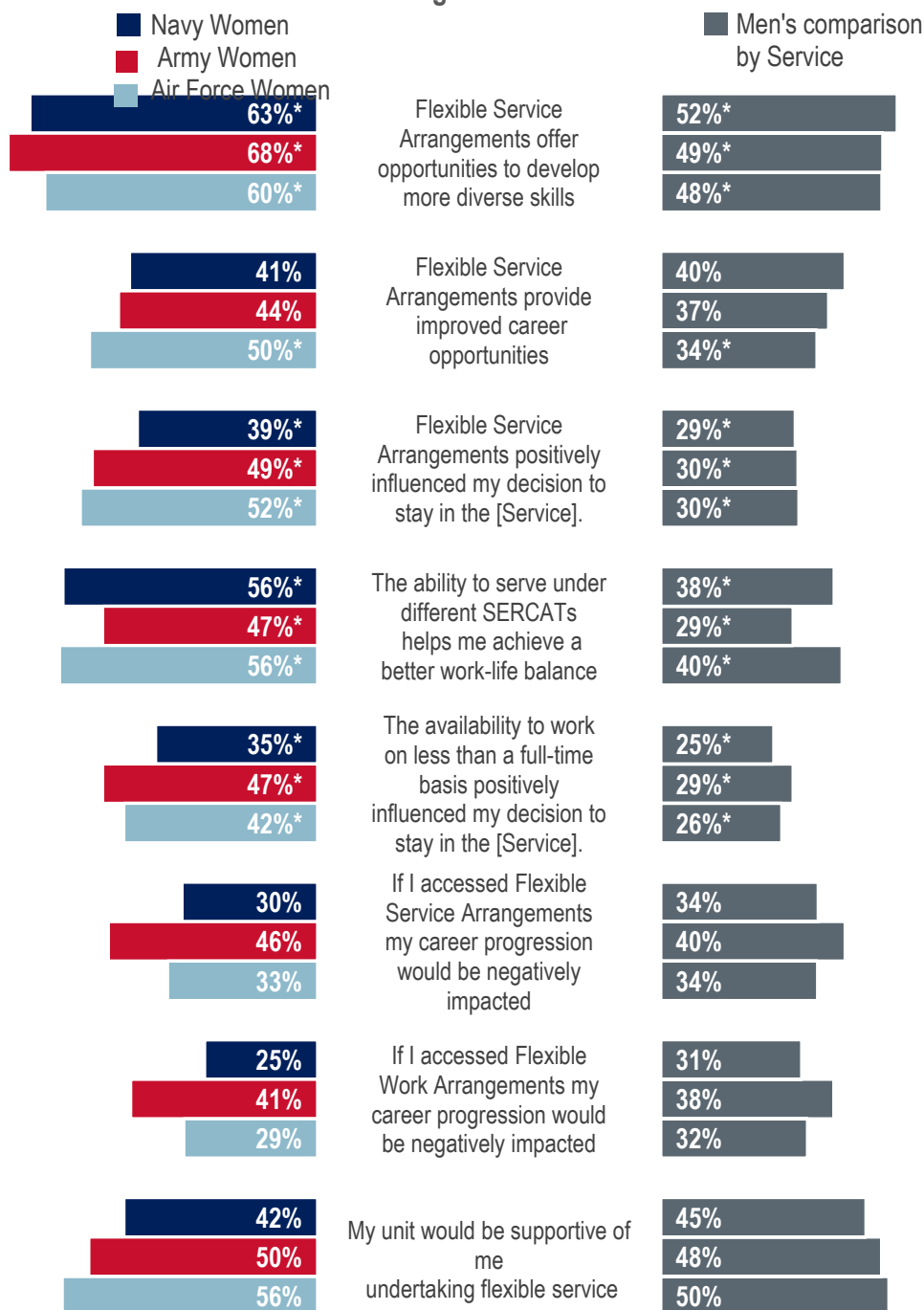


Figure 9 Positive Perceptions of Benefits of Flexible Work and Service Arrangements 2023-24²⁸

Note: A statistically significant difference between women and men's positive responses is indicated with an asterisk. Tests are done between women and men in the same Service and not between Services.

²⁸ Data is from the YourSay Workplace Experience Survey. Percentages represent positive responses. The survey questions present the respondents' own Service, this is represented here generically with [Service]. This data is for the Permanent and Reserve force.

Next Steps

The 2024-25 Report will have an expanded focus on flexible work and service arrangements. This will support the organisation's understanding of how flexible work and service arrangements are used, the barriers and issues that arise in their use, and avenues for addressing negative perceptions and concerns.

KPI 4: Efforts to ensure more women have opportunities to reach leadership

Key Findings for KPI 4

- In 2023-24, women participated at close to Service participation rates for ADFA post-graduate study.
- Women's participation in the Defence Assisted Study Scheme (DASS) is higher than proportional representation.
- In 2023-24, Navy had women on all their promotion boards. Air Force had at least one woman on all promotion boards and approximately half of boards had multiple women participating. Army had at least one women on 201 of 209 (96%) promotion boards in 2023-24.
- Women were represented on most Defence senior decision-making committees but were under-represented proportionally. However, this could be a reflection of women's participation in Senior ranks.
- In 2023-24, women were recognised through Defence Commendations at a percentage slightly higher than their Service participation. Operational Service Medals were presented to women broadly consistently with their deployment and Service participation.

Mentoring, Sponsorship, and Networking

Each Service runs their own mentoring and networking programs for women to attend. These programs offer benefits to women at an individual level and may alleviate symptoms of structural factors that negatively impact women's participation. The services fund additional professional development workshops and forums for women that may not be reflected in Table 21.

Table 17 Women's Participation in Single Service Mentoring and Networking Programs (2023-24)

Service ²⁹	Program	Number of women who attended
Navy	Navy Women Mentoring	137
	Advanced Leadership Program	7
	Executive Ready Program	13
	Leading Edge	5
	Women and Leadership Australia Symposiums ³⁰	88
	Impact Program	4
Army	LEAD (Leadership Enhancement and Development) Coaching	6
	DSSC (Defence Strategic Studies Course) Coaching	4
	Independent Coaching	3
	Chief of Army Symposium 2023 – Junior Leader Fellowship	14
	Army WO1 Communities of Practice	9
Air Force	Women's Integrated Networking Group (WINGS)	847
	Business Speaking Workshops	127
	Maternity and Extended Leave Support (MELS) Program	55
	HPEP Mentoring Program (Health Mentoring Program)	110
	Air Force Leadership Coaching	7
	Art of Mentoring ³¹	80
ADF	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Programs	1700
	Empower Mentoring Program	151 mentees 112 mentors

²⁹ Data is provided by relevant areas in Defence.

³⁰ International Women's Day 2024 was a major symposium event for Navy women in 2023-24.

³¹ Art of Mentoring is a calendar year program, numbers reflect 2024 attendance.

Access to Professional Education

ADF women are accessing education schemes at a level consistent with, or above their Service participation. For ADFA post-graduate study women are participating at close to Service participation rates. Women's participation in the Defence Assisted Study Scheme (DASS) is almost double their Service participation rates.

Table 18 Women's Participation in Education Schemes in 2022-23 and 2023-24³²

Education scheme	Navy		Army		Air Force	
	2022-23	2023-24	2022-23	2023-24	2022-23	2023-24
ADFA Post-Graduate study	23.4%	24.3%	13.5%	13.9%	24.7%	27.8%
Defence Assisted Study Scheme	28.8%	35.0%	31.6%	31.2%	44.1%	43.5%

Representation of Women in Promotion Boards

The ADF Performance Framework for Gender Inclusion in the Australian Defence Force lists two relevant action items:

1. Increase women's representation in strategic leadership positions across the ADF
2. Every promotion board/selection panel for senior ranking positions...is to include at least one woman and one member who is 'external to Service'.

In 2021, Chiefs of Service Committee (COSC) agreed that every promotion board or selection panel for senior ranking positions should include a minimum of one woman, and one person 'external to Service'.³³ In 2023-24, Air Force had at least one women on all promotion boards and approximately half of boards had multiple women participating. Army had no women in 8 of their promotion boards in 2023-24. The Army promotion boards with no women were due to those identified for participation needing to withdraw. Replacement with another woman was not possible due to a lack of available women at the time.

Table 19 Number and percentage of promotion boards with at least one woman board member (2023-24)³⁴

Mode of Service	Rank Group	Navy	Army	Air Force
Permanent Force	Officers	24 of 24 boards	31 of 38 boards (82%)	84 of 84 boards
	Other ranks	56 of 56 boards	162 of 162 boards	131 of 131 boards
Reserve Force	Officers	Navy runs integrated Permanent and Reserve boards.	3 of 3 boards	44 of 44 of boards
	Other ranks		5 of 6 boards (83%)	73 of 73 boards

Note: These numbers indicate the boards with at least one woman board member, but multiple women may have been present.

³² Data is provided by relevant areas in Defence.

³³ Senior rank positions are defined as Lieutenant Colonel or equivalent and above, and Warrant Officer Class 2 or equivalent and above. External to service includes ex-Defence members or Defence public servants.

³⁴ Data is provided by relevant areas in Defence.

Representation of ADF women on Defence senior decision-making committees

In 2023-24 women were represented on most Defence senior decision-making committees, except the Defence Security Committee or Intelligence Enterprise Committee in 2023-24 (Table 24). While the 15% women's participation on senior committees was below the ADF percentage of 20.7%, this is likely a reflection of women's participation in senior ranks and will look differently in 2024-25 due to recent senior officer promotions.

Table 20 Percentage of women on Defence senior committees 2023-24³⁵

Tier	Name of Committee	Members	ADF Women	ADF Men	APS Women	APS Men
1	Defence Committee (DC)	9	11%	22%	11%	56%
1	Defence Audit & Risk Committee (DARC)	12	0%	8%	33%	58%
2	Chiefs of Service Committee (COSC)	16	12%	56%	6%	25%
2	Enterprise Business Committee (EBC)	22	9%	27%	23%	41%
2	Investment Committee (IC)	26	8%	27%	31%	35%
2	Defence Strategic Policy Committee	16	6%	31%	25%	38%
3	Defence People Committee	23	13%	35%	39%	13%
3	Defence Finance and Resourcing Committee	23	4%	30%	26%	39%
3	Defence Communication & IS Capability Committee	20	5%	30%	35%	30%
3	Defence Security Committee	30	0%	27%	30%	43%
3	Defence Joint Warfare Committee	27	7%	70%	15%	7%
3	Intelligence Enterprise Committee	11	0%	36%	36%	27%
	Totals	235	6%	22%	11%	56%

³⁵ Data is provided by Enterprise Governance Branch, Department of Defence.

Honours and Awards

Honours and Awards should generally be aligned to the participation rates of each Service.³⁶ Women were underrepresented for the operational Distinguished Service Cross and Medal and the Conspicuous Service Cross and Medals. However, the number of these awards presented in 2023-24 was small.

Lived Experience

I believe that the ADF would derive capability benefits from a more inclusive 'medalic' recognition system. There is too much left to 'chance' in recognising our people with H&As. It is a 'lottery' that supervisors have the time, motivation and particular writing skills to make a cogent and compelling argument. – Air Force Senior Officer, woman, aged 50-54 years old

The percentage of Army who received Order of Australia Awards was smaller than their participation percentage in 2023-24 whereas Navy and Air Force women were recognised as a similar rate to their participation.

In 2020-21 Army had a 50% gender split for their Operational Service Medals, Conspicuous Service Cross and Medals, and Order of Australia awards – this drove the percentage up for the ADF overall in these years. There are fluctuations in the percentage of women receiving these honours and awards, but it is hard to identify any specific trends as medallic recognition is complex and multi-faceted.

Table 21 Percentage of Honours and Awards presented to women for the last five years³⁷

Year	Navy	Army	Air Force	ADF
Conspicuous Service Cross and Medal (Operational and Non-Operational)				
2019-20	39.4%	15.4%	25.0%	24.8%
2020-21	31.6%	50.0%	19.4%	39.7%
2021-22	20.7%	19.0%	23.7%	20.8%
2022-23	35.7%	14.3%	33.3%	24.0%
2023-24	28.6%	12.2%	15.4%	17.5%
Australia Day Medallion				
2019-20	30.2%	30.2%	32.0%	30.7%
2020-21	35.0%	28.6%	25.0%	29.3%
2021-22	36.4%	18.6%	32.1%	26.7%
2022-23	30.4%	30.2%	32.7%	31.0%
2023-24	30.6%	25.0%	30.2%	28.4%
Order of Australia (Officer, Member, and Medal)				
2019-20	14.3%	12.0%	33.3%	18.5%
2020-21	21.1%	50.0%	11.1%	34.9%
2021-22	16.7%	17.5%	35.3%	21.0%
2022-23	15.4%	17.4%	23.1%	18.4%
2023-24	23.1%	10.0%	25.0%	17.8%

³⁶ For more details, search 'Honours and Awards' on the Defence.gov.au website.

³⁷ Data is provided by Directorate of Honours and Awards, Defence People Group.

Defence commendations exist to provide formal recognition for outstanding achievements where other Honours are not appropriate and individuals are typically nominated through their chain of command. In 2023-24, Commendations were awarded to women at a higher percentage than their Service participation (Table 26).

Table 22 Percentage of Defence Commendations awarded to women³⁸

Year	Navy	Army	Air Force	ADF
Defence Commendations (Bronze, Silver, Gold)				
2022-23	29.1%	16.2%	28.9%	23.5%
2023-24	28.8%	20.2%	32.5%	26.6%

Tenure or long service awards are presented to members after a specified period of qualifying service. The Australian Defence Medal recognises ADF personnel who enlisted for an indefinite period and rendered four years qualifying service or who enlisted for a fixed period and completed the specific period of enlistment (or a period of four years, whichever is the lesser). The Defence Long Service Medal may be awarded to a member who has completed fifteen years of qualifying remunerated service in the ADF, clasps are then awarded for each further five years.³⁹ Tenure award percentages reflect long-term retention of women in the ADF (see KPI 5) and historical recruitment achievement.

Table 23 Percentage of Tenure Awards presented to women in 2023-24⁴⁰

Tenure Medal	Navy	Army	Air Force	ADF Women
Australian Defence Medal	23%	14%	30%	18%
Defence Long Service Medal	27%	12%	21%	17%
First Clasp to the Defence Long Service Medal	24%	13%	17%	17%
Second Clasp to the Defence Long Service Medal	17%	14%	20%	16%

³⁸ Data is provided by Directorate of Honours and Awards, Defence People Group.

³⁹ For further information, search 'Honours and Awards' on the Defence.gov.au website.

⁴⁰ Data is provided by Directorate of Honours and Awards, Defence People Group.

KPI 5: Retention of women is equal to men

Key Findings for KPI 5

- In 2023-24, women had a lower separation rate than men (8.5% for women, 11.0% for men).
- For the three Services, men have a longer length of service than women at time of separation. For Navy and Army, the difference is smaller for Other Ranks than Officers. For Air Force, the difference in length of service is larger for Other Ranks men and women than it is for Officers.
- Officer women have a longer length of service on separation compared to Other Ranks women.
- The percentage of women and men retained after using maternity and/or parental leave is similar at the 1.5 year and 3 year stages but a difference emerges at 5 years.
- For all Services, the percentage of members in URF relationships was higher for men than women.

Retention is a complex issue and is reflected on throughout the report because many of the issues in the other 12 KPI have an impact on women's decisions to stay in the ADF. This chapter focuses on comparing the separation patterns of men and women in the ADF. Defence has been implementing initiatives to improve retention and support the growth of the ADF overall such as retention bonuses and the ADF Employment Offer Modernisation Program. Addressing poorer retention of women is important for increasing women's participation, particularly in senior ranks and leadership positions (see KPI 1, KPI 4).

Separation rates

In 2023-24, the separation rate for ADF women was lower than for men for the permanent force (8.5% for women, 11.0% for men) (Figure 10). Separation rates of men and women have shown similar patterns over the past five year, increasing and decreasing in the same years.

For Officers, there are very small differences in the separation rates for men and women. Other Ranks men and women have higher separation rates compared to Officer men and women. The rates are slightly larger for Other Ranks men compared to Other Ranks women, but it is generally only around a percentage point difference. The number of members associated with a percentage point is different for men and women. For example, the number of members leaving is much larger for 1 percentage point of Army men than for 1 percentage of Army women.

Women and men have similar separation rates but if these were to equalise then ideally men's separations would reduce rather than women's increasing to match men's.

Separation Rates by Rank Cohort and Gender from 2019-2020 to 2023-2024

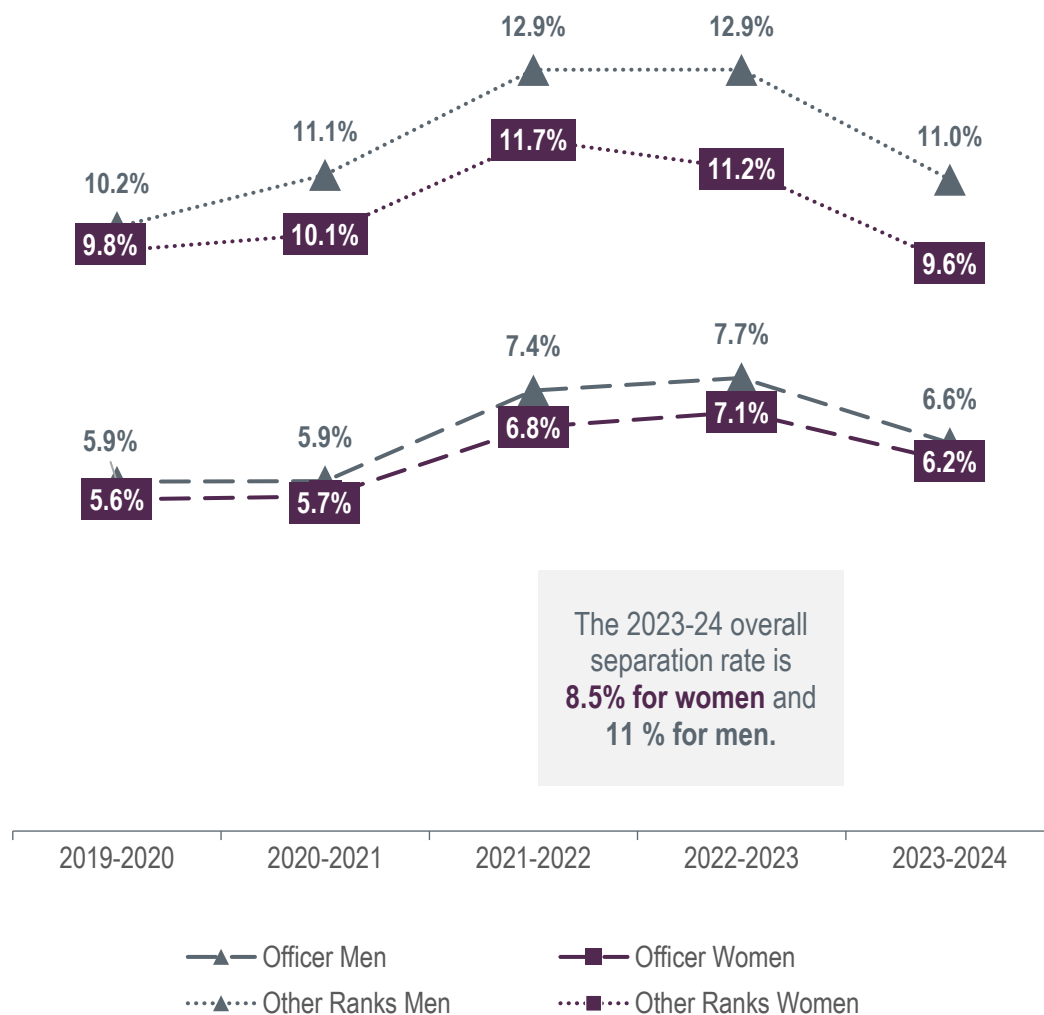


Figure 10 Separation rates for by Rank Cohort and Gender from 2019-2020 to 2023-24⁴¹

Note: This reflects the percentage of the workforce that separated each year. This includes trained and training force but not gap year members (SERVOP G).

Men and women are separating at similar rates through the four broad categories of separation shown in Table 28. There may be differences in the reasons driving voluntary separation that would benefit from further exploration. Men separate for Age Retirement at a higher rate than women do, but this is consistent with women having shorter median length of service (KPI 5) and a lower number of women joining 30-40 years ago who would now be reaching compulsory retirement age.

⁴¹ Data from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence

Table 24 Separation types by Service and Gender for 2023-24

	Navy		Army		Air Force	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Voluntary Separation	49.7%	54.8%	46.8%	48.5%	52.9%	55.7%
Involuntary Separation	38.4%	35.1%	34.5%	33.2%	36.9%	34.4%
Age Retirement	0.3%	1.1%	1.7%	2.2%	0.0%	0.9%
Trainee Separations	11.6%	9.0%	17.0%	16.1%	10.2%	8.9%
<i>Total</i>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Time in service when separating

Stabilising the permanent ADF workforce is one of the three key lines of effort identified in the 2024 Defence Workforce Plan. As part of this, Defence is working to increase the median length of service for permanent ADF members from 7 years to around 12 years.

Length of Service for Officers

Overall, median length of service at time of separation has increased for woman officers in the Navy, Army, and Air Force plus Army men, but has decreased for Navy and Air Force officer men. Since 2019-20, the difference in length of service for Navy men and women Officers has decreased from a 12-year difference to men serving for 5.7 years longer than women.

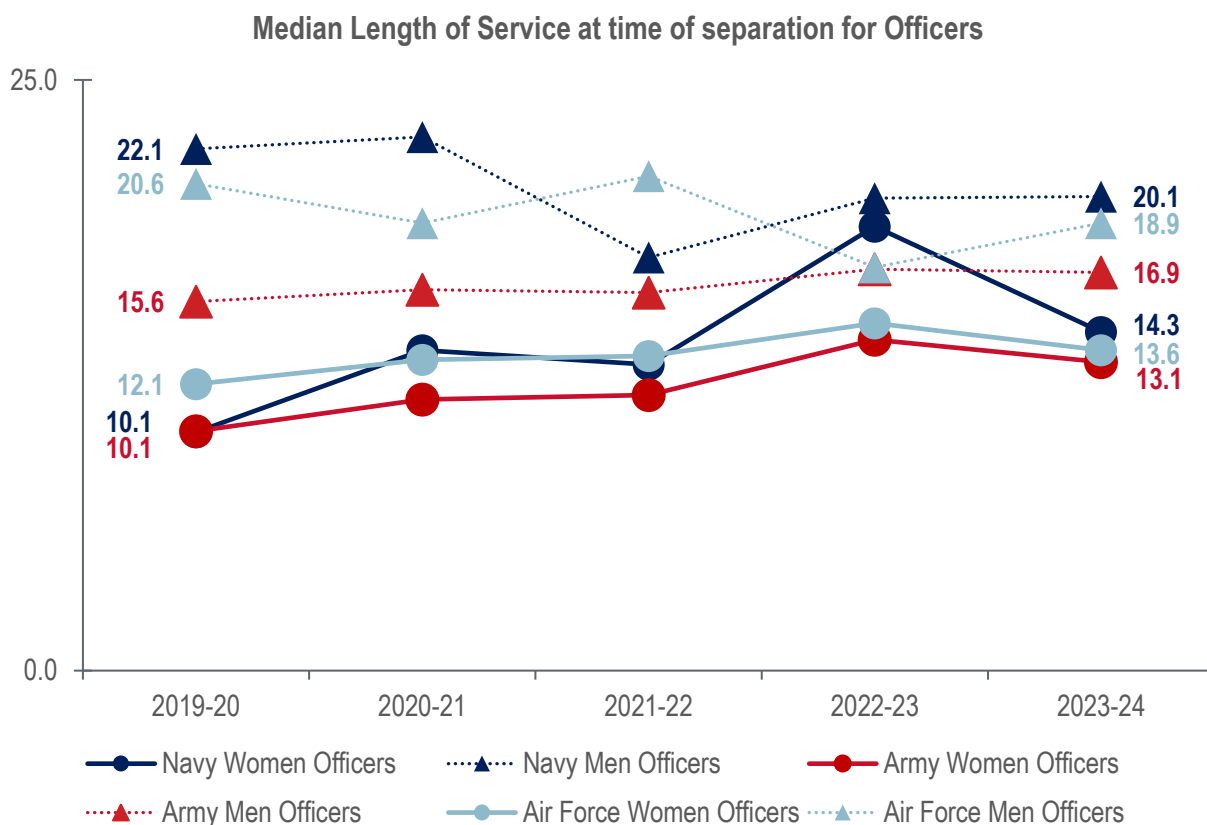


Figure 11 Five year trends for median length of Service at time of separation for Officers⁴²

Table 25 Median length of service (years) at time of separation for Officers⁴³

Year	Service	Women	Men	Difference
2019-20	Navy	10.1	22.1	12.0
	Army	10.1	15.6	5.5
	Air Force	12.1	20.6	8.5
2020-21	Navy	13.6	22.6	9.0
	Army	11.5	16.1	4.6
	Air Force	13.2	18.9	5.8
2021-22	Navy	13.0	17.5	4.5
	Army	11.7	16.0	4.3
	Air Force	13.3	20.9	7.6
2022-23	Navy	18.8	20.0	1.2
	Army	14.0	17.0	3.0
	Air Force	14.7	17.1	2.4
2023-24	Navy	14.3	20.1	5.7
	Army	13.1	16.9	3.8
	Air Force	13.6	18.9	5.4

⁴² Data from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence for the permanent force (SERCAT 7 and 6).

⁴³ Data from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence for the permanent force (SERCAT 7 and 6).

Length of Service for Other Ranks

Over the past five years, the difference in median length of service at time of separation for Navy men and women has fluctuated with a notable increase in 2021-22 but has overall reduced. The length of service at separation for Army men and women has fluctuated but is now very similar. This is due to an overall increase in length of service for Army Other Rank women but also a slight decrease for Army men this year. Air Force has the largest gender difference for Other Ranks length of service at time of separation with Air Force men serving 7.4 years longer than women do. This difference has increased over the past five years.

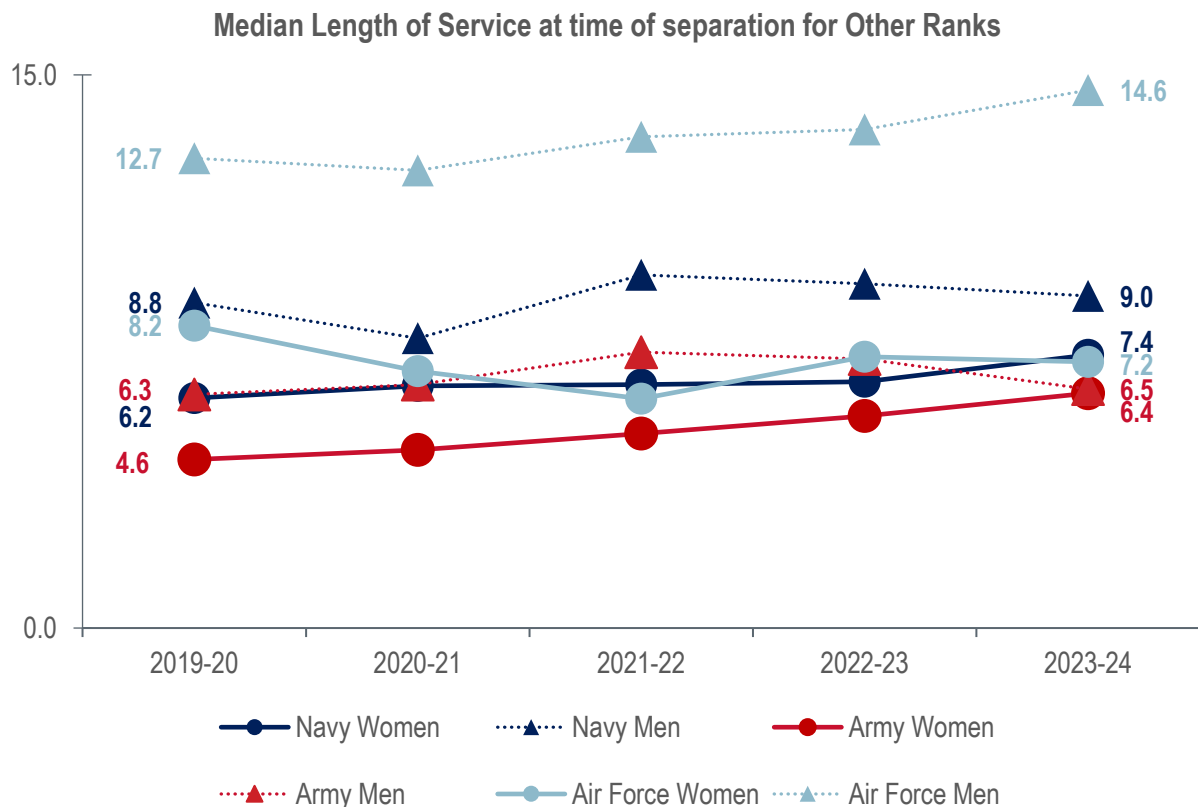


Figure 12 Five year trends for median length of service at time of separation for Other Ranks⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Data from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence for the permanent force (SERCAT 7 and 6).

Table 26 Median length of service (years) at time of separation for Other Ranks⁴⁵

Year	Service	Women	Men	Difference
2019-20	Navy	6.2	8.8	2.6
	Army	4.6	6.3	1.8
	Air Force	8.2	12.7	4.5
2020-21	Navy	6.6	7.9	1.3
	Army	4.8	6.6	1.8
	Air Force	7.0	12.4	5.4
2021-22	Navy	6.6	9.6	3.0
	Army	5.3	7.5	2.2
	Air Force	6.2	13.3	7.1
2022-23	Navy	6.7	9.3	2.7
	Army	5.7	7.3	1.5
	Air Force	7.4	13.5	6.2
2023-24	Navy	7.4	9.0	1.6
	Army	6.4	6.5	0.1
	Air Force	7.2	14.6	7.4

⁴⁵ Data from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence for the permanent force (SERCAT 7 and 6).

Use of maternity and parental leave

The percentage of women and men retained after using maternity and/or parental leave is similar at the 1.5 year and 3 year stages but a difference emerges at 5 years. However, it is hard to identify if the decrease in women retained is driven by their use of maternity leave or is related to overall shorter length of service for women or an interaction of these factors. Removing gendered parental leave and increase the uptake of FWA/FWS by men is likely to positively impact this statistic.

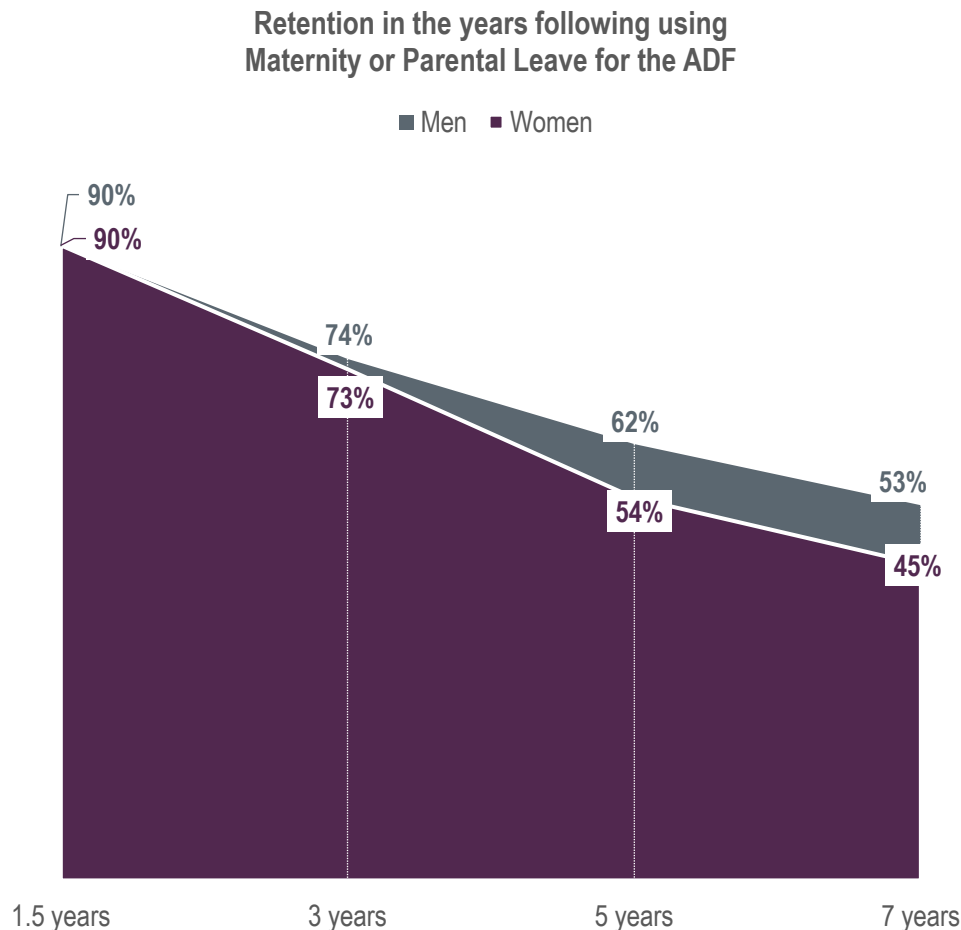


Figure 13 Retention in the years following using Maternity or Parental Leave for the ADF⁴⁶

Note: Data is for permanent force only and excludes members with a Worn Rank of E0. Leave types include paid adoption leave, forced maternity leave – ADF, paid parental leave – ADF, paid maternity leave, and parental leave. Percentage represents the percentage of members who took leave 18 months, 3 years, 5 years, or 7 years ago and were in the ADF as of July 2024.

Lived Experience

Defence should review policy regarding Maternity leave and the mothers returning to work. I have returned from Mat leave and within the first 3 months of return I am being made to go out field leaving my child. I am now considering discharging. Army Other Ranks/Junior NCO, woman, aged 25-29 years old

⁴⁶ Data from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence.

Navy has lower percentages of women retained at each time period compared to Army and Air Force (Table 31). There are significant challenges for parents in balancing the needs of their families and caring responsibilities with conditions of service. It is likely that due to the ongoing gendered nature of childcare, women are disproportionately impacted when children reach school age due to a need to manage school holidays, school hours, and an increased desire for location stability. Removing the gendered elements of parental leave and increasing the use of FWA/FSA by men is likely to positively impact this. This is covered in more detail in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 Women in the ADF Reports.⁴⁷

Table 27 Service percentages of members retained at different length of times after taking paid maternity or parental leave⁴⁸

		Percentage retained			
		1.5 years	3 years	5 years	7 years
Navy	Women	86%	68%	50%	43%
	Men	92%	77%	63%	56%
Army	Women	91%	73%	56%	44%
	Men	88%	73%	60%	51%
Air Force	Women	94%	77%	56%	47%
	Men	91%	74%	66%	57%

Note: Data is for permanent force only and excludes members with a Worn Rank of E0. Leave types include paid adoption leave, forces maternity leave – ADF, paid parental leave – ADF, paid maternity leave, and parental leave. Percentage represents the percentage of members who took leave 18 months, 3 years, 5 years, or 7 years ago and were in the ADF as of July 2024.

Air Force runs two programs targeted at pregnancy and return to work for increased participation and retention. Maternity and Extended Leave Support coordinators (MELS) is a coaching program in five locations around Australia that is targeted at pregnancy planning through to the first two years post-birth. Through MELS, members can access individual monthly coaching sessions that are focused on understanding maternity/paternity, health, financial, and personnel policies as they apply to their personal situation. Monthly Networking Support Groups (MSNGs) is a monthly group program at five locations that is run by Air Force but all services are encouraged to attend. The purpose of MSNGs is to provide members and supervisors networking opportunities, peer support, and education.

⁴⁷ Previous Women in the ADF Reports are accessible from the Defence Annual Reports webpage.

⁴⁸ Data from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence.

Reasons for Staying

In 2023-24, men and women gave similar reasons for choosing to remain with Defence. Job security and the desire to 'do something for my country' were the two most popular reasons.

Table 28 Top Five Reasons for Staying in the ADF in 2023-24 from the YourSay Workplace Experience Survey

Men	Women
Job security	Job security
To do something for my country	To do something for my country
A sense of belonging to the [Service] ⁴⁹	The salary
The salary	A sense of belonging to the [Service]
The nature of Defence work	The employment conditions (e.g. work-life balance, flexible work)

For women, the fifth most popular selected reason for staying in the ADF is for the employment conditions. To retain women it is important to ensure employment conditions are competitive with other employment opportunities and that flexibility is offered where possible..

Family needs – members with dependents and childcare

Childcare accessibility, affordability, and appropriateness is a known issue for Defence members and their families. The 2022-23 Women in the ADF Report includes a detailed discussion of childcare for ADF Families including data from the Defence Census 2023.⁵⁰

The Defence and Veteran Family Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2029 will guide the support provided to Defence and Veteran families by Defence and the Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA). The Strategy's associated Action Plan includes actions related to childcare and schooling support for children. Defence has undertaken a review of Defence childcare support services in August 2024 and is currently preparing an implementation plan.

As of 1 July 2023, the focus of categorisation shifted from member-centric to family-centric with the new Categorisation Framework. Defence is phasing out all terminology that refers to families as dependents, such as Members with Dependents (MWD), or Members with Dependents Unaccompanied (MWD(U)). The new framework has enabled Defence to recognise ADF members' contemporary family structures and unique family situations. This was intended to provide greater flexibility for supporting members and their families. The new Categorisation Framework now includes Non-Resident Family (NRF), Unaccompanied Resident Family (URF) and Recognised Other Persons (ROP). For the policy on categorisations, refer to the Pay and Conditions Manual (PACMAN) Chapter 1, Part 3, Divisions 3 and 4.

⁴⁹ For this question in the YourSay Workplace Experience Survey, members are presented with their Service name.

⁵⁰ Women in the ADF Report 2022-23, page 28. Accessible from the Defence Annual Reports webpage.

Lived Experience

More Defence Establishments need to offer childcare facilities for ADF members. Particularly in remote localities where childcare can become considerably hard to come by with the expense tripled. This will create a greater work life balance for serving families that have BOTH parents serving full time in the ADF. Army Other Ranks/Junior NCO, woman, aged 25-29 years old

The use of URF is often a necessity for stable income or career progression in dual-income families. Use of URF and nights away from home have an impact on the member and their family. It can present challenges for childcare arrangements, put extra strain on those remaining at home, and cause disruptions for relationships.

Lived Experience

I have had to fly my family in to look after my son because I had to do a course and my husband is currently deployed. Air Force Junior Officer, woman, 30-34 years old

Conditions of service are designed to support a full time working man in a married heterosexual relationship with a partner who is either unemployed or has the ability to move her job quite easily (teacher, nurse). A serious overhaul is required - I suggest working groups with those that are not white middle-class men. Air Force Junior Officer, woman, 30-34 years old

The percentages of men in URF relationships were higher than for women for the three Services (Figure 14). The greatest difference between men and women's percentages was for Navy Other Ranks followed by Army Other Ranks.

For each Service, the percentage of members in Defence recognised relationships who used URF in the past five years is greater for men compared to women. Navy has had an increasing percentage of women Officers using URF while the percentage of Officer men and Other Ranks men has decreased. There is not a large difference between men and women in Army's use of URF. Army Officer men have the highest percentages using URF. Use of URF arrangements has remained fairly stable for Army and Air Force with small fluctuations.

Proportion of ADF members with recognised relationships who used MWD(U) arrangements in 2023-24

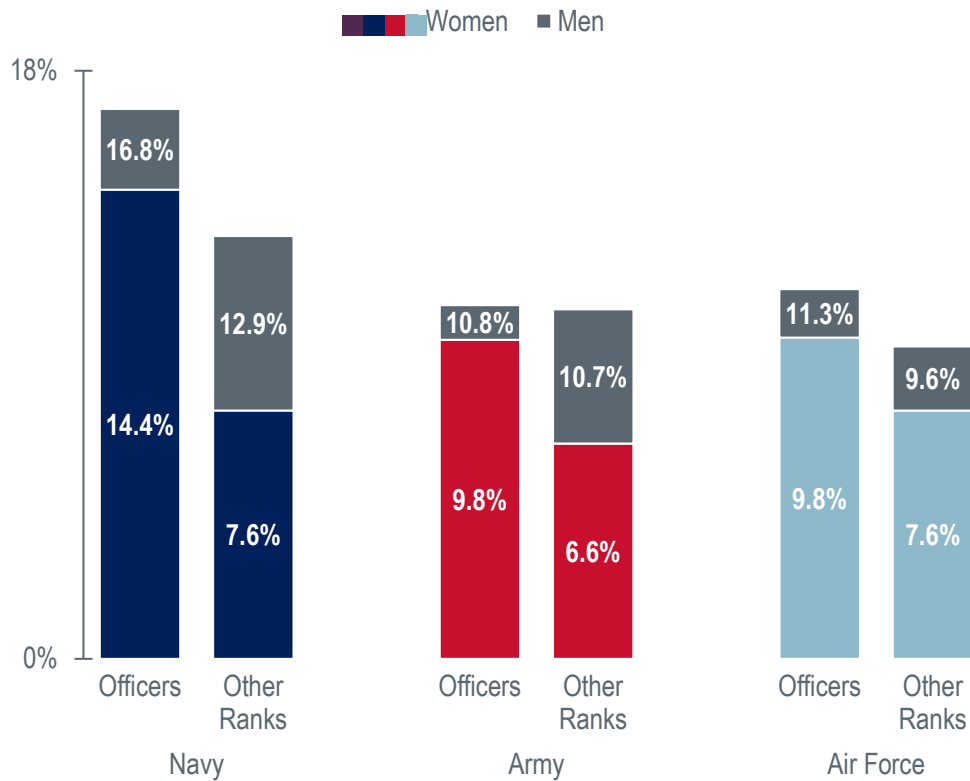


Figure 14 Percentage of ADF members in Defence recognised relationships who used URF arrangements in 2023-24⁵¹

Table 29 Percentage of Navy members in Defence recognised relationships who used URF arrangements for the past five years

Navy				
	Officers		Other Ranks	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
2019-20	10.70%	20.00%	7.90%	15.60%
2020-21	12.00%	20.10%	7.70%	14.50%
2021-22	11.10%	18.20%	8.90%	13.50%
2022-23	13.00%	16.10%	6.90%	12.50%
2023-24	14.40%	16.80%	7.60%	12.90%

⁵¹ Data from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence.

Table 30 Percentage of Army members in Defence recognised relationships who used URF arrangements for the past five years

Army				
	Officers		Other Ranks	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
2019-20	8.30%	10.80%	5.00%	10.80%
2020-21	8.40%	11.10%	6.30%	10.80%
2021-22	9.70%	10.90%	5.90%	10.30%
2022-23	9.20%	10.50%	5.00%	9.30%
2023-24	9.80%	10.80%	6.60%	10.70%

Table 31 Percentage of Air Force members in Defence recognised relationships who used URF arrangements for the past five years

Air Force				
	Officers		Other Ranks	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
2019-20	8.50%	10.60%	7.70%	9.40%
2020-21	8.10%	11.00%	7.30%	9.10%
2021-22	9.80%	9.90%	6.50%	8.30%
2022-23	7.90%	10.40%	6.40%	8.50%
2023-24	9.80%	11.30%	7.60%	9.60%

KPI 6: Number of women recruited against Service targets

Key Findings for KPI 6

- In 2023-24, the ADF met 39% of the recruitment target for women and 69% of the target for men. This is lower than in 2022-23 when the ADF met 49.8% of the recruitment target for women.
- Performance against recruitment targets for Officers was higher than for Other Ranks.

Achieving Targets

In 2023-24, Defence recruited 39% of the overall target number of women and 69% of the target for men (Figure 15). On 1 July 2023, a revised service delivery model was introduced as the result of a change of recruiting services contractor. The implementation of the new revised model has restricted candidate throughput to a level significantly less than necessary to achieve ADF targets.

For Officer women, 56% of the target number of women were recruited compared to 88% of the target for men. For Other Ranks women, 30% of the target number of women were recruited compared to 66% of the target for women. The higher achievement of targets for Officers compared to Other Ranks may suggest that Officer roles are currently more appealing to new entrants than Other Ranks. This could have consequences for workforce hollowness and negatively impact retention of Other Ranks members in the future.

Navy reached 32% of their target for women, and 70% of the target for men. Army reached 31% of target for women and 64% of target for men. Air Force was closer to reaching targets and they recruited 72% of their target number of women and 86% of their target for men.

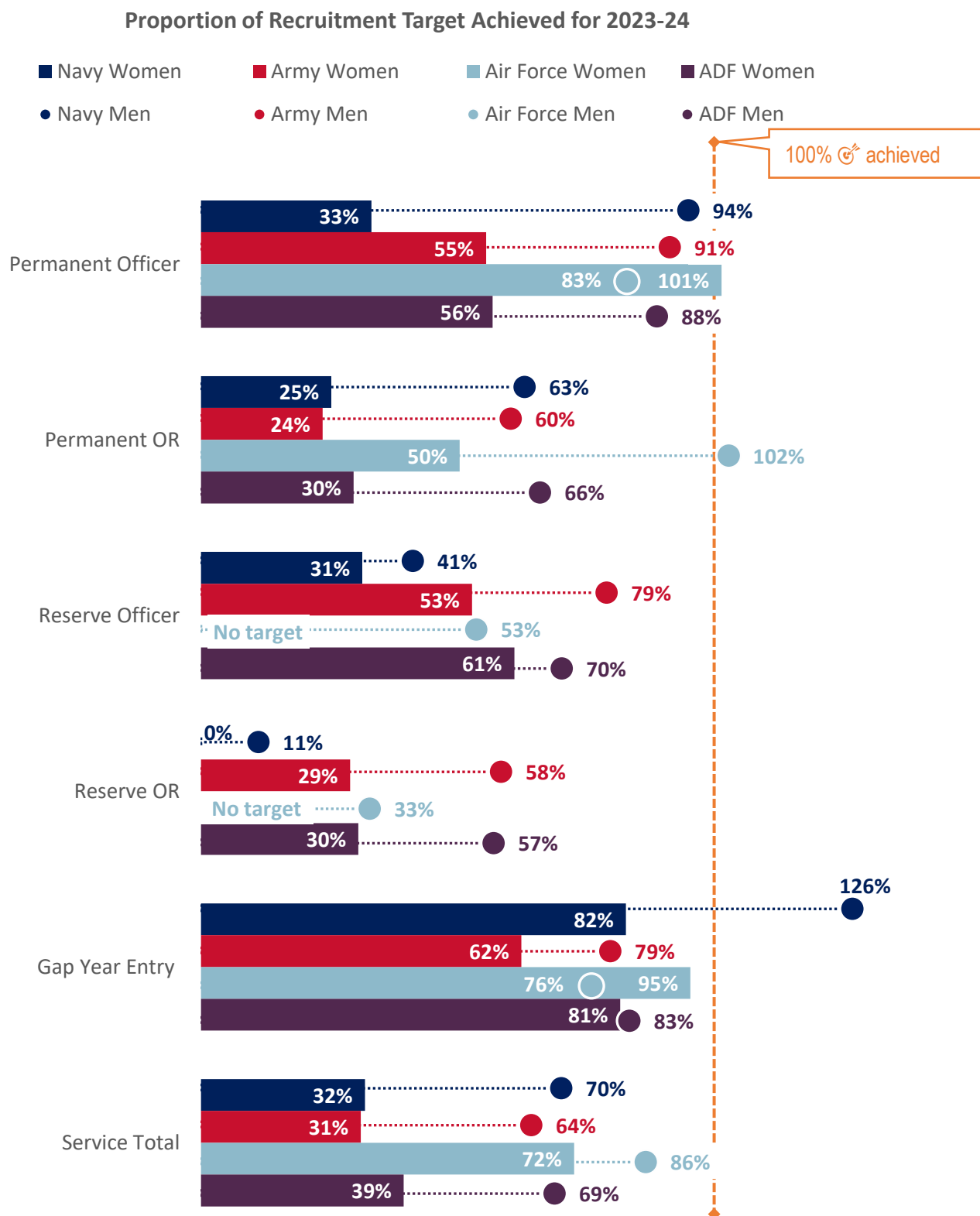


Figure 15 Percentage of Recruitment Target Achieved in 2023-24 by Entry Pathway, Service, and Gender

Note: The target number of individuals for each entry pathway is different for each Service, for example the target number of permanent other rank women is larger for Navy than Air Force.⁵²

Targets for women's recruitment

Defence is not recruiting men or women at the numbers required to meet targets or grow women's participation. While the targets set for recruitment are not being met as shown in Figure 15, it is still important that they are being set to achieve the goals for women's participation. By setting the goal percentage of women higher than the target, the Services and ADF will be able to more effectively shift the current percentages. Navy has set high goals for the recruitment of women and if achieved these would support the achievement of the 2030 targets.

Initiatives to attract and recruit women

National unemployment is low which creates a highly competitive labour market and demand for the skills required by both the ADF and in industry.⁵³ The ADF is experiencing a crisis in recruitment and retention, and is continuing to transform associated practices.⁵⁴ This includes widening eligibility criteria for joining the ADF, expanding the recruiting system, improving processes for faster recruiting, and encouraging current personnel to stay and serve for longer through retention initiatives.⁵⁵

To support women's progress through recruitment and retain them in the pipeline, there were three key initiatives introduced or sustained in 2023-24. DFR introduced a women's fitness program where an eight-week face-to-face program with dedicated support and resources is provided to female candidates post assessment stage. Army has the 'Army Pre-Conditioning Course' (APCP) which is 7-week program to develop all candidates' fitness, confidence and resilience. The program is for candidates who have the attributes the Army is looking for, but who require additional support and development in one or more of these areas. Candidates that successfully complete the program, join the Army Recruit Course in week 3. The APCP is not a new program, however is ongoing due to its success.

Defence Force Recruiting (DFR) has been working on a collaboration with Women in Cyber Australia. Women in Cyber Australia provide women with information on employment opportunities in the ADF. As one of the outcomes of this collaboration, DFR is attending a virtual information session during Cyber Awareness Month (1-31 October 2024) to provide insight and information into the cyber roles available within the ADF. Meaningful and close collaboration with organisations who are strongly committed and at the forefront of efforts to advance women's careers will assist in filling critical capability of roles such as cyber analyst and electronic warfare operators.

Defence has been implementing policy changes to improve recruitment and retention of members broadly. The Defence Employment Offer Modernisation Program is developing policy options to modernise and simplify the ADF employment offer. This includes new Allowance, Categorisation, Location, and Leave frameworks. The number of people who can access the Defence Assisted Study Scheme (DASS) each year has been increased and the reimbursement amounts increased. This could be particularly impactful for women who use DASS at a rate greater than their participation percentage in Defence (see KPI 4). The ADF Remuneration Package Review has commenced and includes an approach for regularly benchmarking ADF salaries, outcomes that consider workforce segments, demographics, and international military forces, and options that support current needs plus future growth. Research into the 'Employee Value Proposition' (EVP) of the ADF is ongoing and Defence will continue to focus on improvements.

⁵² Data provided by Defence Force Recruiting

⁵³ Defence Workforce Plan, Defence, 2024

⁵⁴ Defence Workforce Plan, Defence, 2024

⁵⁵ Defence Workforce Plan, Defence, 2024

KPI 7: Completion rates for initial-entry training are equal between women and men

Key Findings for KPI 7

- There was no gendered difference in 2021-22 or 2022-23
- In 2023-24, men and women completed initial entry training at similar rates with two exceptions. Army women completed Officer training at a lower percentage than men. Navy and Air Force women graduated ADFA at higher rates than men in their respective Services.

In 2023-24, there was no gender difference for the completion of initial entry training in Navy and very similar completion rates for Air Force men and women (Figure 16). There is a 10 percentage point difference between Army women and men's completion rates for Officer training that is not present for Other Ranks training. However, the percentage of men who completed Army Initial Entry Officer Training increased by 10 percentage points in 2023-2024 compared to 2022-23 while there was no change for women. This change may be worth investigating to identify what may have caused such a large change, however it could simply be a cohort characteristic of the 2023-24 intake. Army's lower completion rate of initial training could be linked to the high physical requirements of the training, but they are working to implement a more gradual adjustment for fitness.

Navy and Air Force women graduated from ADFA at higher rates than men, but it is similar for Army men and women. The percentage of Navy and Air Force men who graduated from ADFA was 9 percentage points lower in 2023-24 than 2022-23 and Navy women's graduation percentage dropped 6 percentage points in the same timeframe. This suggests that there are cohort differences that should be monitored.

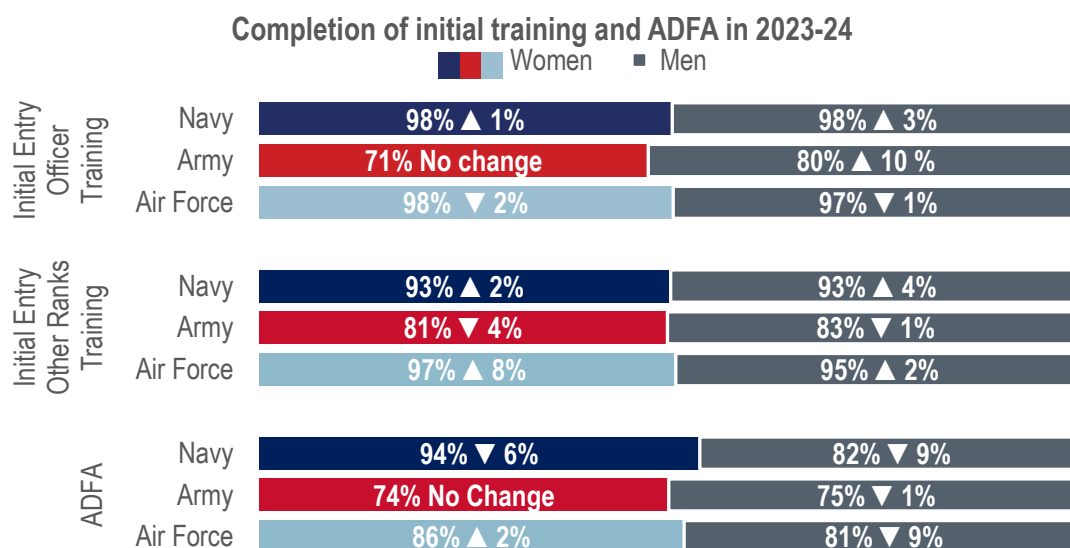


Figure 16 Completion of Initial Entry Training for Officers, Other Ranks, and at ADFA by Service and Gender with comparison to 2022-23⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Data provided by the Services and ADFA. The percentage reflects the percentage who completed of those who commenced. Numbers reflect courses that completed, those still in training at the end of the 2023-24 financial year.

KPI 8: Women are retained in the recruiting pipeline at a similar rate to men

Key Findings for KPI 8

- There are gender differences for the ratios of Online Aptitude Test (OAT) session attendance to enlistment. These vary by entry pathway and Service.
- Smaller percentages of women enlist into technical roles compared to men.
- In 2023-24, women were 30% of the overall prior Service re-enlistments. Women are a very small percentage of overseas recruitment, but almost half of gap year transfers.

Conversion ratios from Online Aptitude Test (OAT) to enlistment

The Online Aptitude Test (OAT) occurs early in the recruitment process and is an indicator of early intention to join. The ratios reflect the number of people who completed an OAT for each enlistment in a category. For example, the ratio of 1 in 5 for women's in Navy Undergraduate Officer entry pathway reflects that for every 5 OAT completions, 1 woman enlisted in the pathway. High ratios suggest a larger number of people dropping out of the recruitment pipeline between the OAT and the point of enlistment. They can also reflect barriers associated with how popular a role is and the total application numbers. Competitive pathways may have very high ratios due to the relationship between the number of applicants relative to the number of positions available.

For most entry pathways the ratios are very similar for men and women, but there are some differences (Figure 17). For Navy and Air Force the ratio for ADFA entry is smaller for women than it is for men, but the reverse is true for Army. There are also some large differences between Services. The ratio of applicants to successful applicants is larger for Army across almost all pathways than for Navy or Air Force. With such low achievement of recruitment targets, particularly for women, it is important for Defence Recruitment to identify barriers to enlistment that may be causing the high ratios.

Navy has the smallest ratios and as such the highest percentage of OAT session attendance that results in successful enlistments. Entry into Army Officer roles has larger ratios compared to Navy and Air Force Officer Entry. There may be an element of Officer Selection Boards for Army that are contributing to a non-conversion of OAT session attendance into enlistment. There is a larger gender difference for 'Undergraduate Officer' for Army (1 in 14.3 women, 1 in 10.2 for men), in comparison this difference is only 0.6 larger for Air Force women and is smaller for Navy women than men. Air Force has the smallest ratios for 'General entry technical' of the Services. For most entry pathways there is only a very small difference in the ratios for men and women.

Ratio for enlistments after OAT session attendance

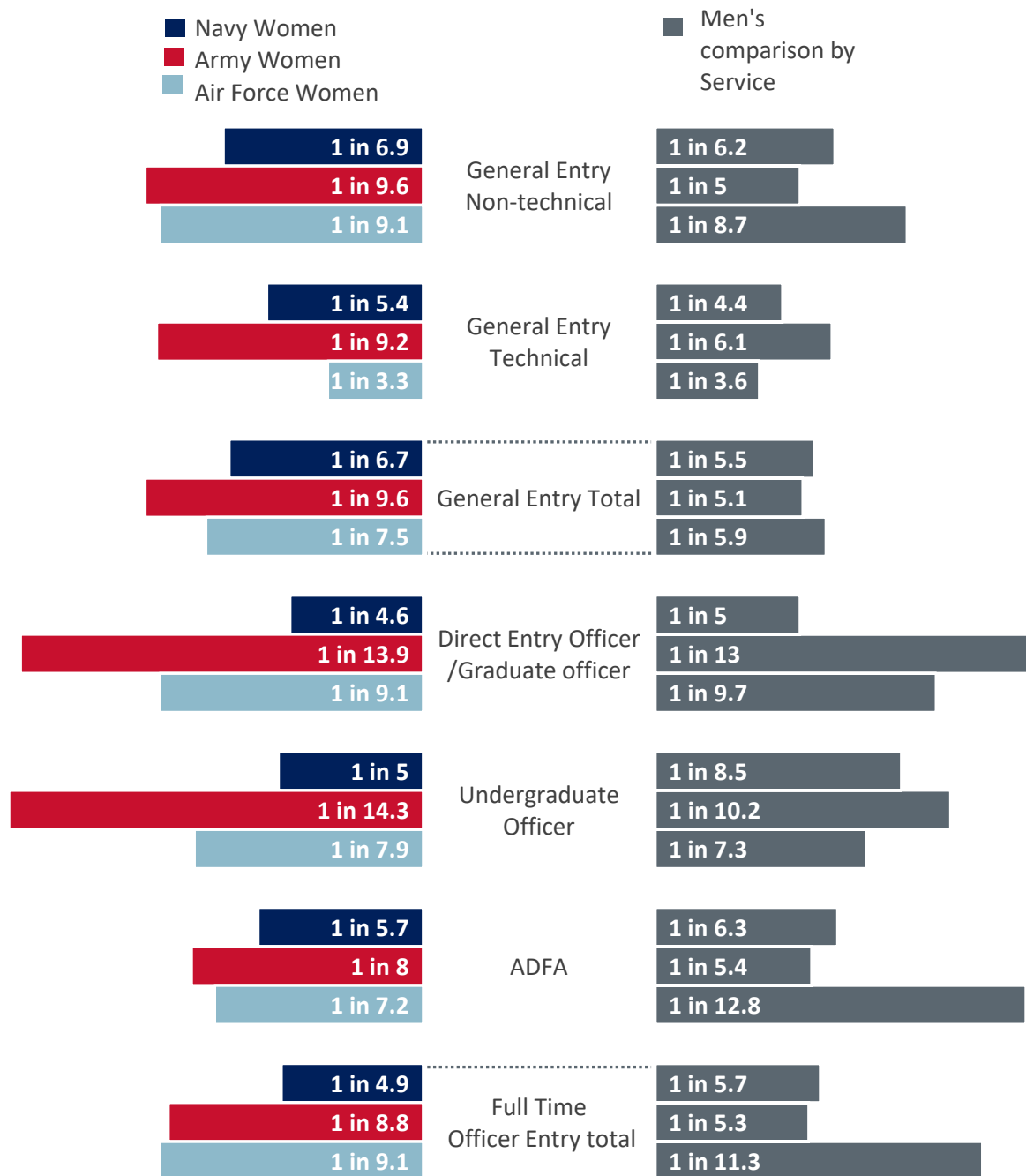


Figure 17 Ratio of enlistments after Online Aptitude Test (OAT) session

Enlistment into Technical Roles

Women are underrepresented in Other Rank technical role enlistment, as they would ideally be entering at percentages similar to the Service participation rate or the 2030 targets (Figure 18) (See KPI 1 for participation rates and targets). Technical role enlistments have fluctuated over the years with Navy's percentages increasing while Air Force has had an overall decrease since 2019-20.

Women's enlistment into Other Rank Non-technical roles in 2023-24

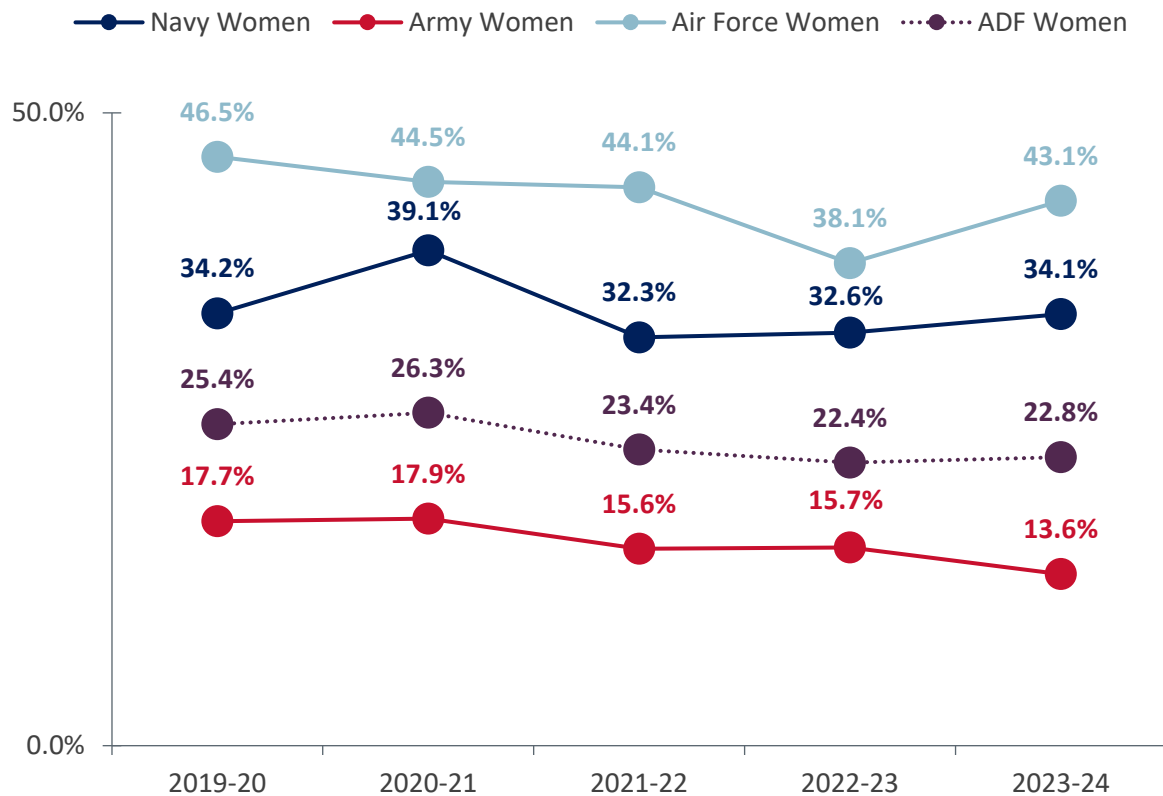


Figure 18 Percentage of women in enlistments for Other Rank technical roles⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Data is from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence and includes permanent force members (SERCAT 7 and 6) enlisted from all sources.

Prior Service Enlistment

In 2023-24, women were 30% of the overall prior service re-enlistments and this can be broken down into different pathways. Women are a small percentage of overseas recruitment, but almost half of Gap Year transfers. There is a pattern of higher representation of women for the Officer streams but the percentages for the different pathways are broadly consistent with the composition of the ADF overall. The high percentage of women who transfer after a Gap Year suggests this could be a strong avenue for increasing women's participation in the ADF and this was one of the entry pathways with higher achievement of recruitment targets (KPI 6).

Table 32 Pathways for entry into the Permanent ADF in 2023-24⁵⁸

Pathways for entry with prior service	Women	Men
Overseas recruitments	5%	95%
Re-enlistments - Other Ranks	19%	81%
Re-enlistments - Officers	23%	77%
Service Transfer - Other Ranks	26%	74%
Service Transfer - Officers	33%	67%
Transfers from Gap Year	44%	56%
Transfers from Reserves - Other Ranks	22%	78%
Transfers from Reserves - Officers	31%	69%
Overall prior service re-enlistments	30%	70%

⁵⁸ Data is from Directorate of Workforce Intelligence and includes permanent force members (SERCAT 7 and 6).

KPI 9: Women transfer to the reserves and use Total Workforce Systems options at a similar rate to men

Key Findings for KPI 9

- Women participate in the Reserves at a percentage lower than the Permanent service.
- Women are proportionally underrepresented in SERCAT movements.
- SERCAT 6 usage is too low for men and women to make effective comparisons for use.

The ADF Total Workforce System (TWS) was introduced in 2016 to deliver a Service Spectrum designed to contribute to capability that offered Defence the strategic flexibility to manage the workforce in a range of full-time and part-time service arrangements. The core part of the ADF TWS is the service spectrum consisting of seven Service Categories or SERCAT three Service Options or SERVOP. All members of the ADF are allocated a SERCAT between 7 and 2. The TWS gives members choice in the way they serve by offering them the ability to transfer between different service categories or utilise service options providing them the ability to increase or decrease their working hours or change their work schedule. The intent of this was to help retain members by offering more flexibility in the way they serve. Further detail on the Total Workforce System is available at the TWS Hub Pages - ADF Total Workforce System (TWS) Hub.

The 2024 Defence Workforce Plan Action 5.3 outcome aims for people to be able to more easily enter and re-enter the ADF. Included in Strategic Task Six of the plan is the outcome that Defence will have a strengthened ADF Reserve capability that recognises the importance of competitive conditions of service.

Mobility through SERCAT

Equal use of the TWS and movement between SERCAT would be indicated by women using these options at a rate consistent with their overall ADF participation (20.7% in 2023-24). Figure 19 shows women's movements between the Permanent and Reserve Forces and SERCAT 2. Women are proportionally underrepresented in SERCAT movements, suggesting that men are more likely to use the flexibility of SERCAT changes and ADF Total Workforce System. It is acknowledged that Army's SERCAT 2-5 workforce is utilised differently and to a greater extent than Navy and Air Force. As at 01 June 2024 Army's SERCAT 2-5 workforce was 28,260 with Navy at 6,769 and Air Force at 6,973. Further detail and Service specific SERCAT movement is contained in the Defence Monthly Workforce Report at Pages - Strategic Workforce Reporting and Analysis.

The conditions of service and employment offering of the Defence Reserves may be not be as competitive as necessary to attract or retain members within the TWS and in SERCAT 5/4/3 roles. For example, Reservists are not paid superannuation which may be an important value proposition when comparing with civilian employment.

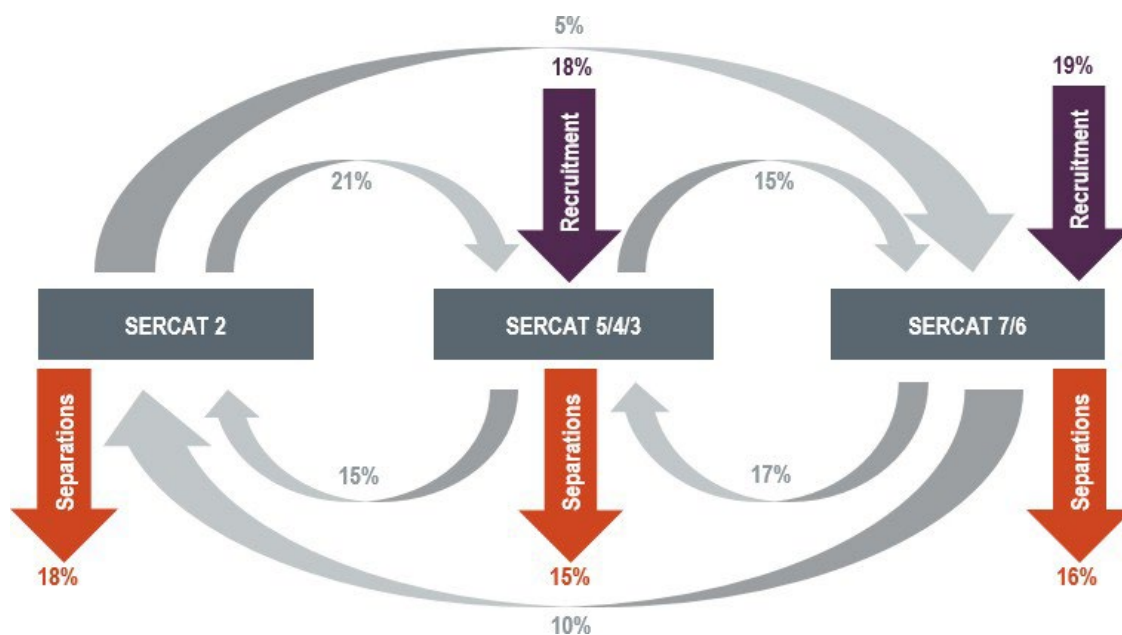


Figure 19 TWS movements for women, from July 2022 to June 2024 for the ADF overall⁵⁹

Use of SERCAT 6

Use of SERCAT 6 is low and this makes comparisons difficult. 0.9% of ADF women are using SERCAT 6 as a formal flexible service arrangement (FSA) (see KPI 3 for FSA) compared to 0.1% of ADF men. As at July 2024, the members using SERCAT 6 were 71.6% women.⁶⁰

SERCAT 6 is attractive to members for balancing family commitments with work and could be important for retention of members with caring commitments. The very low number of members using SERCAT 6 arrangements suggests there may be negative perceptions, issues with access, or structural factors that are limiting uptake.

Use of SERCAT 6 may not be viable for some members as it would mean a reduction in pay and this could be particularly challenging in the Australia's current economic context and the rising cost of living. When posting to a new location, members must renegotiate their SERCAT 6 arrangement with their chain of command. The new workplace may not approve the member's pattern of work which undermines stability for the member and may result in the member separating or moving to SERCAT 5/4/3 instead to meet their needs. Many SERCAT 3/5 personnel render between 100-200 reserve service days representing significant capability to the ADF. Currently, there are systems-level challenges around managing or identifying part-time (SERCAT 6) positions from an administrative perspective that contributes to this unpredictability.

⁵⁹ Data is from Directorate of Workforce Analytics and includes SERVOP C but excludes SERVOP G.

⁶⁰ Data from the HR Strategic Dashboard for the ADF Workforce, accessed 18/09/2024.

Lived Experience

I have used transition to SERCAT 6 on return from Maternity leave for a small period of time before adjusting back to SERCAT 7. I had no issues and found the unit to be very supportive. This is an essential option i believe for returning parents in the workplace – Army Junior Officer, woman, aged 25-29 years old

I would like to highlight the personnel issues. Due to lack of personnel my application for SERCAT6 has been tabled and most likely not approved. This will mean that to look after my child outside of school hours I will need to discharge in the near future. I would prefer to remain in my current job and be able to work within school hours as my husband is also a shift worker and come back to full time work once my child is older. However this does not look possible in the current environment. - Air Force Junior Officer, aged 30-34 years old

I have gone SERCAT 6 as the cost of Before and After school care would mean I would [see] no real financial benefit to working. Changing my hours means my children can get a free bus to a Private School however it is 30 mins away. I still need to pay for the Private school however it was cheaper than before and after school care and public school. The cost and access of Child Care was a big factor in going SERCAT 6 and impacted whether I stayed in Defence or not. – Air Force Junior Officer, woman, aged 40-44 years old

Next Steps

There is further scope to utilise the Total Workforce System to retain skilled and experienced personnel and attract people with the expertise required to meet our ongoing commitments. Next year's report will include a focus on how flexible service arrangements and TWS are being used, increasing their attractiveness and benefits, and how they could better support recruitment and retention.

Additionally, as outlined in the 2024 Defence Workforce Plan Strategic Task 6.2, Defence will implement recommendations from the Strategic Review of the ADF Reserves.

KPI 10: Women are represented proportionally in postings and deployments

Key Findings for KPI 10

- Army and Air Force women were represented in Command positions at a level equal to or greater than their Service participation, while Navy was lower than Service participation.
- Women in all Services were under-represented in Charge / sub-unit Command positions.
- Women were underrepresented on Operational Deployments in 2023-24.

Command Appointments

In 2023-24, Army and Air Force women were represented in Command positions at a level proportionate or greater than proportionate for their Service participation. The percentage of Command positions held by women in the Air Force was 0.6 percentage points higher than Service participation, whilst for Army the difference was 6 percentage points. For Army sub-unit Command positions, only 10% were held by women, which is five percentage points lower than the minimum ideal level. This may be explained by the number of Army sub-unit command positions within the Combat and Security segment which has a low participation of women. The difference was even larger for Air Force where 14.7% of sub-unit Command positions were held by women which is 12.3 percentage points lower than ideal. This under-representation may be passed on to future Command positions in roles where sub-unit command experience is necessary to hold Command positions.

Command and Sub-unit Command Positions by Gender for 2023-24

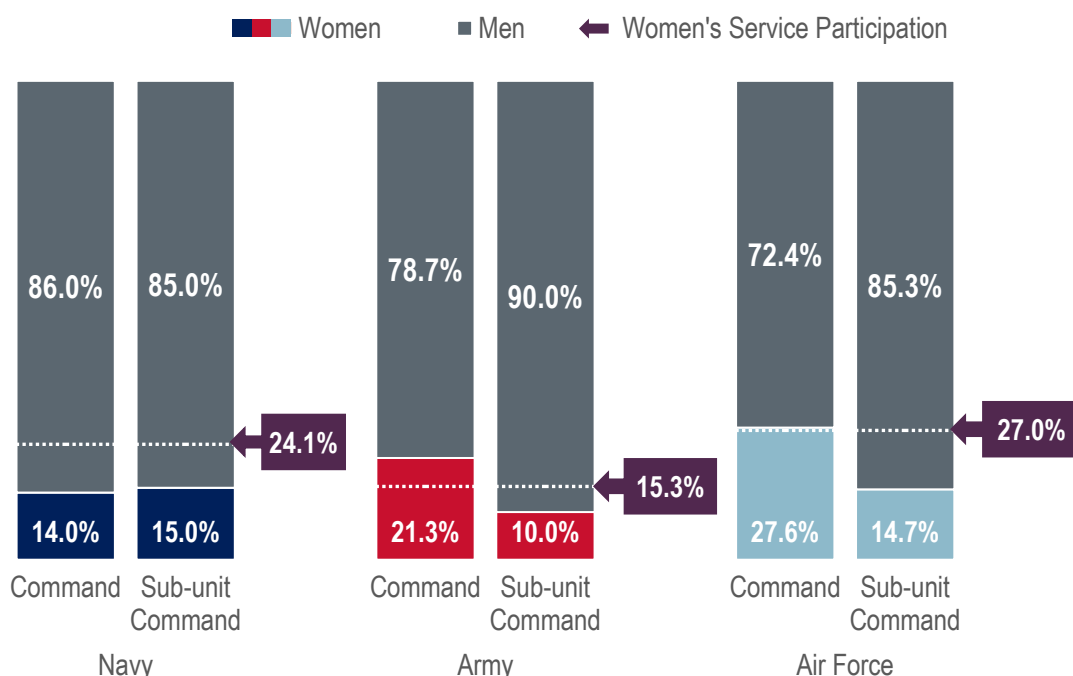


Figure 20 Command, Charge/Sub-unit Command Positions by Service and Gender with 2023-24 Service participation rate for comparison⁶¹

⁶¹ Data provided by the Services and reflects the permanent force.

Women on Operational Deployment

For 2023-24, proportional representation on deployments for women would be achieved at 20.7% of the ADF. Women were 17.9% of the overall deployed personnel in 2023-24 and were deployed close to or greater than proportionally on 8 of the 20 operations. This could be impacted by underrepresentation of women in some of the workforce segments (see KPI 2). It may generate useful insights to explore the percentage of women in expressions of interest for deployments (where applicable) to see if the underrepresentation occurs at that stage or during selection.

The overall percentage of women on deployments is lower than 2022-23 when women represented 18.3% of members deployed. Year on year comparisons may be challenging because the operations and roles vary which may impact opportunities.

Operational Deployments 2023-24

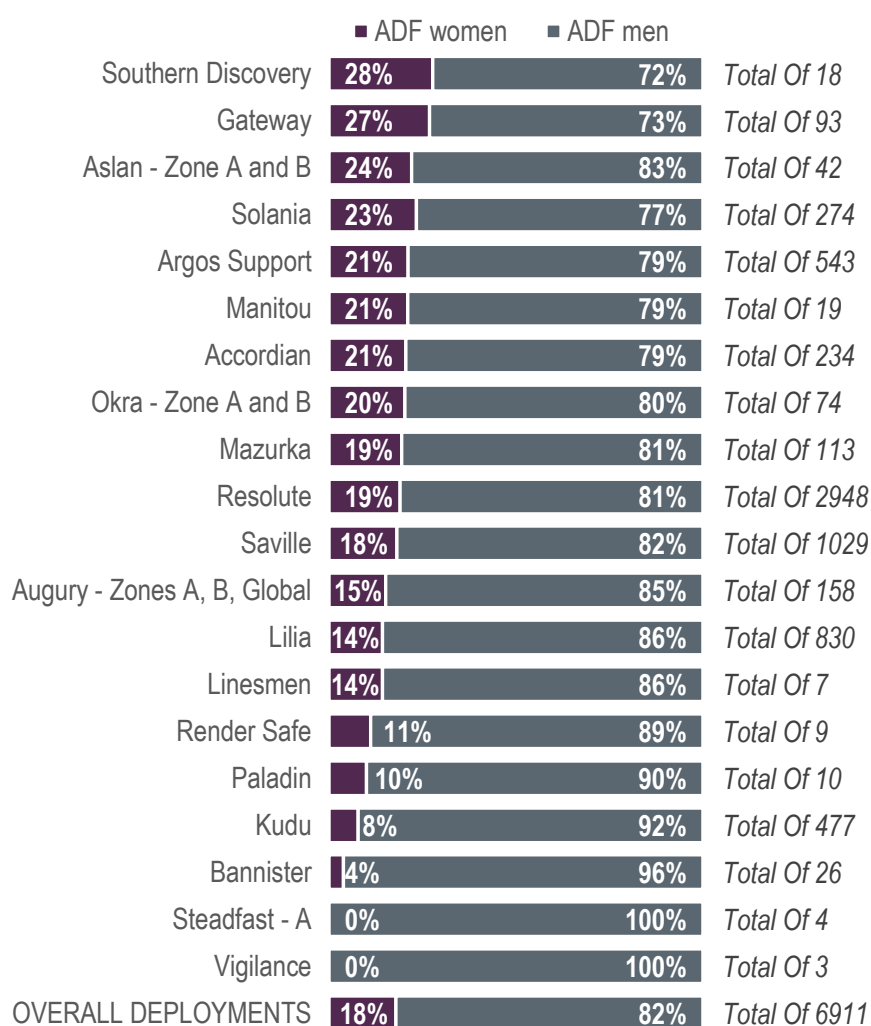


Figure 21 Operational deployments for the permanent force in 2023-2024 by gender⁶²

⁶² To be included in these numbers, members must have been assigned for duty (temporary or permanent) to a force assigned capability and within a specified area of operations on a named warlike operation. Members are counted once for each operation they deployed on. This excludes SERVOP G members.

The Operational Service Medal (OSM) provides recognition for ADF members who rendered service in certain military operations. Women were awarded OSM in 2023-24 at a lower percentage than their representation on deployments.⁶³ Eligibility is often based on length of continuous or aggregated service on an operation, women may not be deploying for periods that reach the eligibility criteria.

Table 33 Percentage of Operational Service Medals awarded to women in 2023-24

Year	Navy	Army	Air Force	ADF
Operational Service Medal - Total				
2019-20	21.5%	3.9%	20.2%	9.4%
2020-21	22.1%	4.5%	20.6%	10.1%
2021-22	22.6%	4.4%	20.8%	10.2%
2022-23	22.9%	4.6%	20.6%	10.2%
2023-24	25.7%	4.6%	20.7%	10.4%

⁶³ This could be a definitional or data issue (such as FY cut-offs) as operational medals should be presented at a rate the same as deployment participation.

KPI 11: No significant difference in cultural reporting between women and men

Key Findings for KPI 11

- In 2023-24, there was no significant difference for ADF men and women for positive perceptions of career progression.
- A smaller percentage of women felt positively about their job engagement compared to men.
- A larger percentage of women felt positively about senior leadership compared to men however the percentage of men who felt positive about their supervisors was larger than for women.
- Just over half of ADF men and women had positive wellbeing in the workplace but the percentage of men was statistically significantly larger than women.
- A larger percentage of men than women indicated positive perceptions of morale, however the percentages were low for both groups which may be concerning.
- Women's psychosocial safety climate perceptions are poorer than men's, with larger proportions of women than men in the Very High, High, and Medium Risk categories.
- The percentage of women who experienced unacceptable behaviour in 2023-24 was larger than men for the ADF overall. This was consistent for all types of unacceptable behaviour included in the Workplace Behaviours Survey.
- A larger percentage of women than men indicated that they made a complaint about unacceptable behaviour, and a larger percentage of men than women indicated they did not seek advice or make a complaint.
- In 2023-24, women were just over half of the clients assisted by SeMPRO but were 82.3% of the clients who had been directly impacted by sexual violence.

The Defence Culture Blueprint is continuing efforts towards Gender equality across the enterprise. The Defence Culture Blueprint Program positions Defence Values and Behaviours as its core. Nesting under the new culture strategy is an Inclusion Toolkit, to embed diversity and inclusive practices across Defence. The Inclusion Toolkit is under development and will further underpin gender equality policies and strategies identified in the culture program. The Defence Culture Blueprint Program will see the evolution of Defence culture over the next 10 years. The Defence Culture Blueprint Enterprise Action Plan will provide a cornerstone for all Defence culture-related activities whilst recognising the integrated nature of Defence's workforce.

The Defence Culture Blueprint is the parent program driving Respect@Work implementation within Defence. It is guided by an Enterprise Action Plan to shape and enhance culture efforts across Groups and Services, ensuring consistent culture expectations and collaborative engagement to uplift culture capability. The implementation of the Respect@Work Framework across Defence aligns with the Enterprise Action Plan to address cultural issues including gender inequality, power imbalance, lack of leadership accountability, exclusion and risks inherent to Defence agreed values and behaviours. The Defence Respect@Work Framework ('the framework') holds senior leadership accountable for upholding the positive duty and modelling inclusive behaviours to positively influence our culture.

Work and Career Experiences⁶⁴

The Career Progression Scale reflects perceptions of the promotion process within Defence, satisfaction with career opportunities and management, and the relevance of duties to training or education. For the ADF overall, there is no significant difference between men and women's

⁶⁴ Data from the YourSay Workplace Experience Survey. Results are a percentage of positive responses (Agree and Strongly agree). For more information, visit the DPIR intranet page (internal to Defence) or contact the research team at Your.Say@defence.gov.au.

perceptions of career progression however both percentages are low (Table 38). Only around one third of ADF members had positive perceptions of career progression.

Table 34 Career Progression Scale for 2023-24

	ADF		Navy*		Army		Air Force*	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Strongly Agree / Agree	34.7%	35.1%	28.7%	31.8%	35.9%	36.9%	36.6%	34.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	30.7%	29.6%	30.4%	28.5%	29.4%	29.6%	31.7%	30.4%
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	34.6%	35.3%	41.0%	39.7%	34.7%	33.4%	31.7%	34.9%

Note: Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between the percentage of men and women.

The Job Engagement Scale relates to ideas of job satisfaction, feelings of personal accomplishment, the perception that the person's work makes an important contribution to Defence, a sense of belonging to Defence, and pride in being a Defence member. The percentage of ADF women who had positive perceptions of job engagement was smaller than men and this was statistically significantly different (Table 39). Army was the only Service with no significant difference between men and women for job engagement.

Table 35 Job Engagement Scale for 2023-24

	ADF		Navy*		Army		Air Force*	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Strongly Agree / Agree	59.6%	62.4%	56.1%	60.9%	60.3%	61.4%	60.7%	64.7%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	21.2%	19.6%	23.0%	19.3%	20.0%	20.0%	21.2%	19.4%
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	19.2%	18.0%	20.9%	19.8%	19.7%	18.7%	18.2%	16.0%

Note: Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between the percentage of men and women.

The Senior Leadership scale reflects perceptions of effective communication, confidence in senior leaders, and that senior leaders are steering Defence in the right direction, achieving good outcomes, making effective strategic decisions, are interested in the views of their people, consult before making decisions, and that they are held accountable for their actions. Around one third of ADF men and women have positive perceptions of senior leadership, with the percentage of women larger than men (this was a statistically significant difference (Table 40).

Table 36 Senior Leadership Scale for 2023-24

	ADF		Navy*		Army		Air Force*	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Strongly Agree / Agree	36.1%	32.0%	32.2%	32.0%	34.2%	28.7%	39.2%	36.3%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	36.9%	1.3%	38.9%	30.0%	35.2%	30.7%	37.2%	32.7%
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	27.0%	36.7%	28.9%	38.1%	30.6%	40.5%	23.6%	30.9%

Note: Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between the percentage of men and women.

The Supervisor Leadership Scale reflects trust and confidence in immediate supervisors, the perception that their supervisor achieves good outcomes and makes effective decisions, provides regular constructive feedback and expectations, and manages performance. It also includes perceptions of whether their supervisor supports inclusive workplace, values diversity, acts in accordance with Defence values, is willing to act on suggestions on how to improve things, and is held accountable. Perceptions of supervisors are more positive compared to senior leaders, with almost three quarters of ADF men and two thirds of ADF women indicating positive perceptions of their supervisors (statistically significant difference) (Table 41). A larger percentage of men than women felt positively about their supervisors and this was statistically significant for all three Services.

Table 37 Supervisor Leadership Scale for 2023-24

	ADF		Navy*		Army		Air Force*	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Strongly Agree / Agree	68.2%	75.3%	66.4%	75.2%	67.5%	74.7%	69.5%	76.4%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18.4%	15.8%	18.8%	14.5%	19.4%	16.2%	17.6%	15.9%
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	13.4%	8.9%	14.8%	10.3%	13.0%	13.0%	13.0%	7.7%

9.1

Note: Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between the percentage of men and women.

Just over half of ADF men and women had positive wellbeing in the workplace but the percentage of men was statistically significantly larger than women (Table 42). It is potentially concerning that these percentages are so low for men and women.

Table 38 Wellbeing in the Workplace Scale for 2023-24

	ADF		Navy*		Army		Air Force*	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Strongly Agree / Agree	56.4%	58.5%	52.4%	57.5%	55.9%	57.7%	58.7%	60.2%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	23.7%	23.6%	25.2%	23.0%	23.9%	24.4%	23.0%	23.1%
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	19.8%	17.8%	22.3%	19.5%	20.3%	17.9%	18.4%	16.7%

Note: Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between the percentage of men and women.

The morale scale reflects the morale of an individual and their perceptions of their workplace morale. A larger percentage of men than women had positive perceptions of morale and this was statistically significant for the ADF and all Services (Table 43).

Table 39 Morale Scale for 2023-24

	ADF		Navy*		Army		Air Force*	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Very High / High	35.6%	41.0%	31.8%	40.2%	37.0%	40.3%	36.3%	42.3%
Moderate	38.3%	38.3%	40.1%	37.1%	37.8%	38.6%	37.9%	38.7%
Very Low / Low	26.1%	20.7%	28.1%	22.6%	25.3%	21.1%	25.8%	19.0%

Note: Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between the percentage of men and women.

Psychosocial Safety Climate

Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) refers to the perception of how well an organisation's policies, practices, and procedures protect the psychological health and safety of its people.^{65 66} PSC levels are indicators of workplace health and safety risk. A healthy PSC in an organisation mitigates the psychosocial hazards that can result in poor psychological outcomes for employees.⁶⁷

High risk environments (low PSC or poor perceptions of psychosocial safety) can be associated with a higher prevalence of workplace unacceptable behaviour such as bullying, higher absence rates, lower job satisfaction, increased intention to leave, and decreased productivity.⁶⁸ Low risk environments (high PSC or good perceptions of psychosocial safety) can be a preventative factor for negative behaviours and can be a buffer when challenges occur, such as periods of high job demands or unacceptable behaviour.^{69 70}

Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) risk for women in the ADF is higher for women than men. The percentage of women who were in the Very High, High, and Medium Risk categories based on their Psychosocial Safety Climate scores was statistically significantly larger than for men. This means that women in the ADF may be at greater risk of psychosocial hazards leading to poor psychological outcomes.

⁶⁵ Dollard, M. F., & Bakker, A. B. (2010). Psychosocial safety climate as a precursor to conducive work environments, psychological health problems, and employee engagement. *Journal of occupational and organizational psychology*, 83(3), 579-599.

⁶⁶ Hall, G. B., Dollard, M. F., & Coward, J. (2010). Psychosocial safety climate: Development of the PSC-12. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 17(4), 353.

⁶⁷ Becher, H., & Dollard, M. (2016). Psychosocial safety climate and better productivity in Australian workplaces: costs, productivity, presenteeism, absenteeism. Safe Work Australia, University of South Australia.

⁶⁸ Owen, M. S., Dollard, M. F., & Afsharian, A., (2021). PSC Fact Sheet. Australian Workplace Barometer Data 2021, stresssafe.com

⁶⁹ Dollard, M. F., & McTernan, W. (2011). Psychosocial safety climate: A multilevel theory of work stress in the health and community service sector. *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences*, 20(4), 287–293. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2045796011000588>

⁷⁰ Dollard, M. F., Dormann, C., Tuckey, M. R., & Escartín, J. (2017). Psychosocial safety climate (PSC) and enacted PSC for workplace bullying and psychological health problem reduction. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 26(6), 844–857. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2017.1380626>

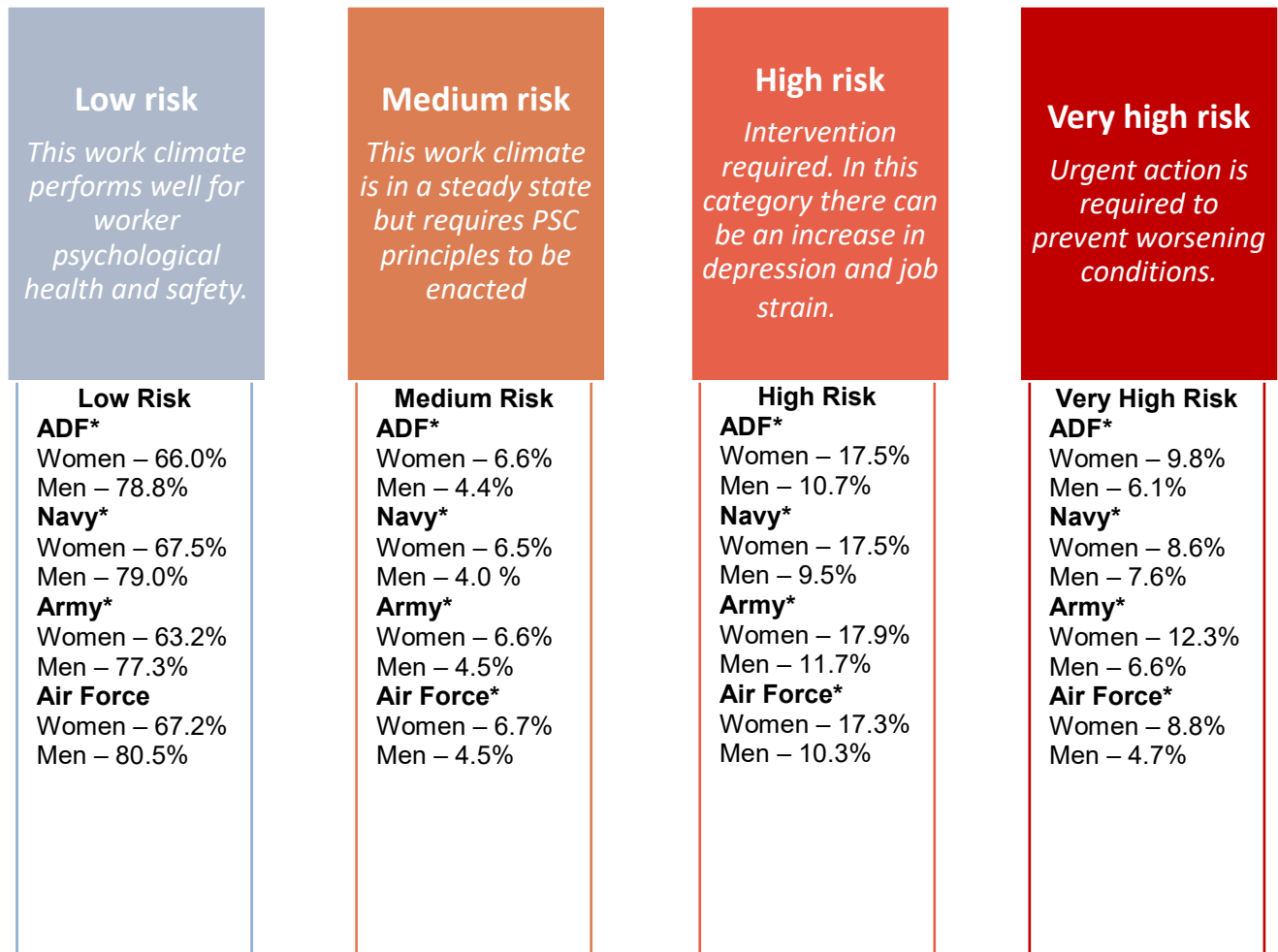


Figure 22 Psychosocial Safety Climate risk categories for 2023-24

Unacceptable Behaviour

'Any unacceptable behaviour' reflects the percentage of respondents who have experienced a form of unacceptable behaviour in the past 12 months.⁷¹ The percentage of women who experienced unacceptable behaviour in 2023-24 was larger than men for the ADF overall, Navy, Army, and Air Force. This difference was statistically significantly different for all of the types of unacceptable behaviour included in the Workplace Behaviours Survey.⁷²

Table 40 Members who experienced Unacceptable Behaviour by Service and Gender for 2023-24

	Navy		Army		Air Force		ADF Overall	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Any Unacceptable Behaviour	52.2%	38.2%	52.1%	29.9%	47.7%	26.8%	50.0%	30.5%
Bullying	28.4%	15.7%	26.0%	13.0%	23.2%	11.2%	25.2%	12.9%
Sexual harassment	7.4%	1.5%	5.3%	0.9%	3.8%	0.4%	5.0%	0.9%
Discrimination	10.0%	5.7%	10.8%	3.8%	8.3%	3.2%	9.5%	4.0%
Sexual assault	1.1%	0.1%	0.5%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%
Abuse of power	13.8%	9.1%	13.1%	7.5%	11.7%	7.1%	12.6%	7.7%
Violent behaviour	9.6%	4.3%	6.2%	3.1%	5.3%	2.8%	6.5%	3.2%

Note: All gender differences are statistically significant.

A larger percentage of women than men indicated that they had made a complaint about unacceptable behaviour, and this difference was statistically significant for Army and the ADF overall (Figure 23). Not all experiences of unacceptable behaviour result in a formal complaint, because policy supports addressing issues at the lowest possible level when practical and appropriate. Defence members should feel supported to take action after an experience in whatever way they feel comfortable with. More than one third of men did not seek advice or make a complaint after their experience. However, the goal is not necessarily to have a 100% complaint rate, but rather to reduce the proportion of members who take no action. Members' perceptions of how serious or impactful the unacceptable behaviour was might influence what action they take. This can range from making a formal complaint to self-managing the situation, or seeing advice or support.

⁷¹ The unit of counting for the WBS is people, not incidents. Where a person has experienced more than one type of unacceptable behaviour, these are counted separately for each type of unacceptable behaviour they experience, but are only counted once in the overall 'Any Experience of unacceptable behaviour'.

⁷² For more information, visit the DPIR intranet page (internal to Defence) or contact the research team at dpi.research@defence.gov.au

2023-24 Profile of action pathways after experiencing unacceptable behaviour

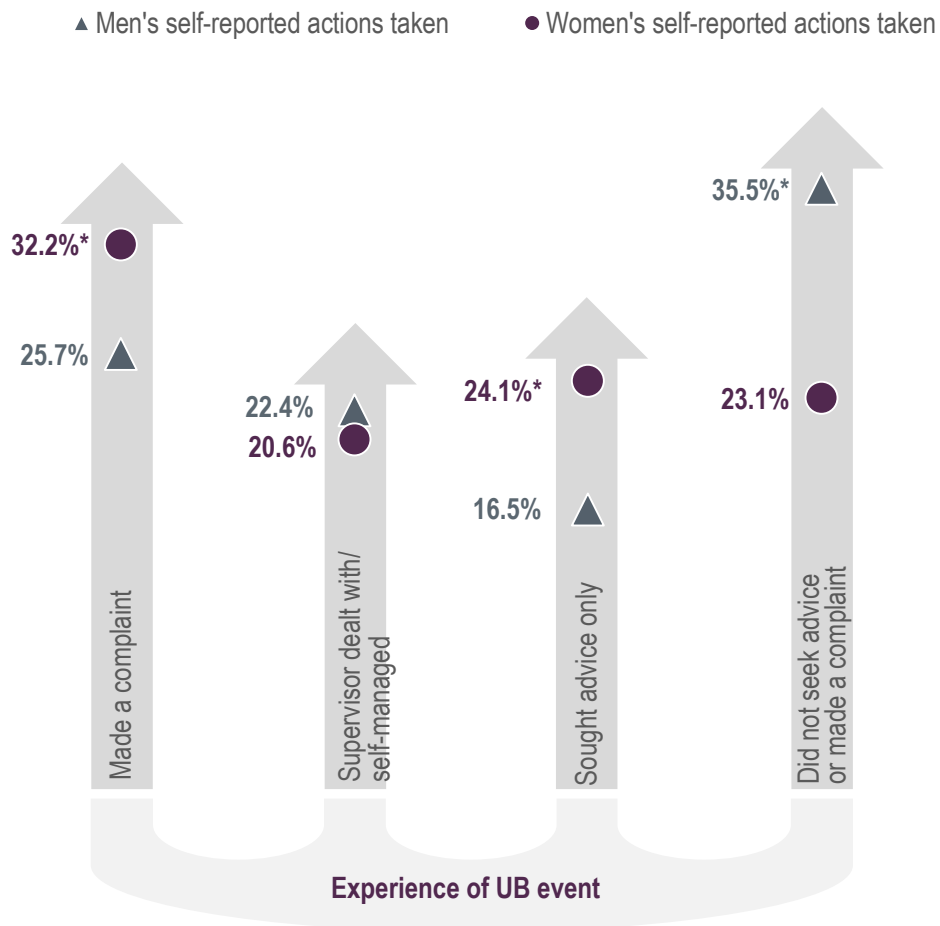


Figure 23 Actions taken after an experience of unacceptable behaviour in 2023-24

Note: Statistically significant difference is indicated with an asterisk next to the larger percentage. Data is from the Workplace Behaviours Survey.

Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office (SeMPRO)

1800 SeMPRO is a 24/7 confidential advice and support service staffed by psychologists and social workers. The service provides immediate and confidential support, information, and advice 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 who have been impacted by sexual misconduct.

In 2023-24, women were just over half of the clients assisted by SeMPRO but were 82.3% of clients who were directly impacted by sexual violence. A slightly larger proportion of men than women contacted SeMPRO for advice on how to help others and for other inquiries. It is positive to see both men and women engaging with SeMPRO for guidance on how to effectively support those around them.

Table 41 Gender breakdown by client type for SeMPRO for 2023-24

	Men	Women	Not disclosed	Total
Clients directly impacted by sexual violence	17.7%	82.3%	0.0%	113
Clients seeking advice to help others	58.4%	41.6%	0.0%	233
Debriefing for vicarious trauma	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	2
Other inquiries	53.6%	42.9%	4%	28
Total	45.5%	54.3%	0.3%	376

Note: Terminology has changed since last year to be more descriptive. The 'other inquiries' category has been added to include clients who contacted 1800 SeMPRO for matters such as education or training.

KPI 12: Increase in the number of women in leadership positions

Key Findings for KPI 12

- In 2023-24, the percentages of eligible Army and Air Force members who were found suitable for promotion and the percentages of the suitable population who were promoted were larger for women than men.
- The percentage of Navy women who were eligible for promotion and were found suitable was smaller than for men, but the percentage of men and women in the suitable population who were promoted was similar.
- The percentage of women in the senior rank cohort (O06-O10/ E06-E10) is smaller than the junior rank cohort (O01-O05/E01-E05) for Officers and Other Ranks.

Professional military and leadership development

In 2023-24, Army and Air Force women participated at a rate similar to their Service participation percentages for Command and Staff College (Table 46). Army women were overrepresented at the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies, making up almost half of the Army cohort.

Table 42 Joint promotional gateway course attendance and command appointments, 2023-24

Course or Appointment	Navy	Army	Air Force
Australian Command and Staff College	15%	14%	28%
Defence and Strategic Studies Course	25%	43%	17%
Command Appointments	14%	19%	28%
Charge Appointments	15%	-	18%
Joint Warrant Officers Course	0% ⁷³	0%	38%

Promotions

In 2023-24, for Army and Air Force the percentage of women who were found suitable for promotion out of the eligible population was higher than for men (Figure 24). The percentage of Army and Air Force women then promoted from this suitable population was also higher for women than men. The percentage of eligible Navy men found suitable for promotion was 9.1 percentage points higher than for women but the percentages of men and women who were promoted from the suitable population was similar.

⁷³

Percentage of eligible population found suitable for promotion (left)
and of those suitable that were promoted (right) in 2023-24

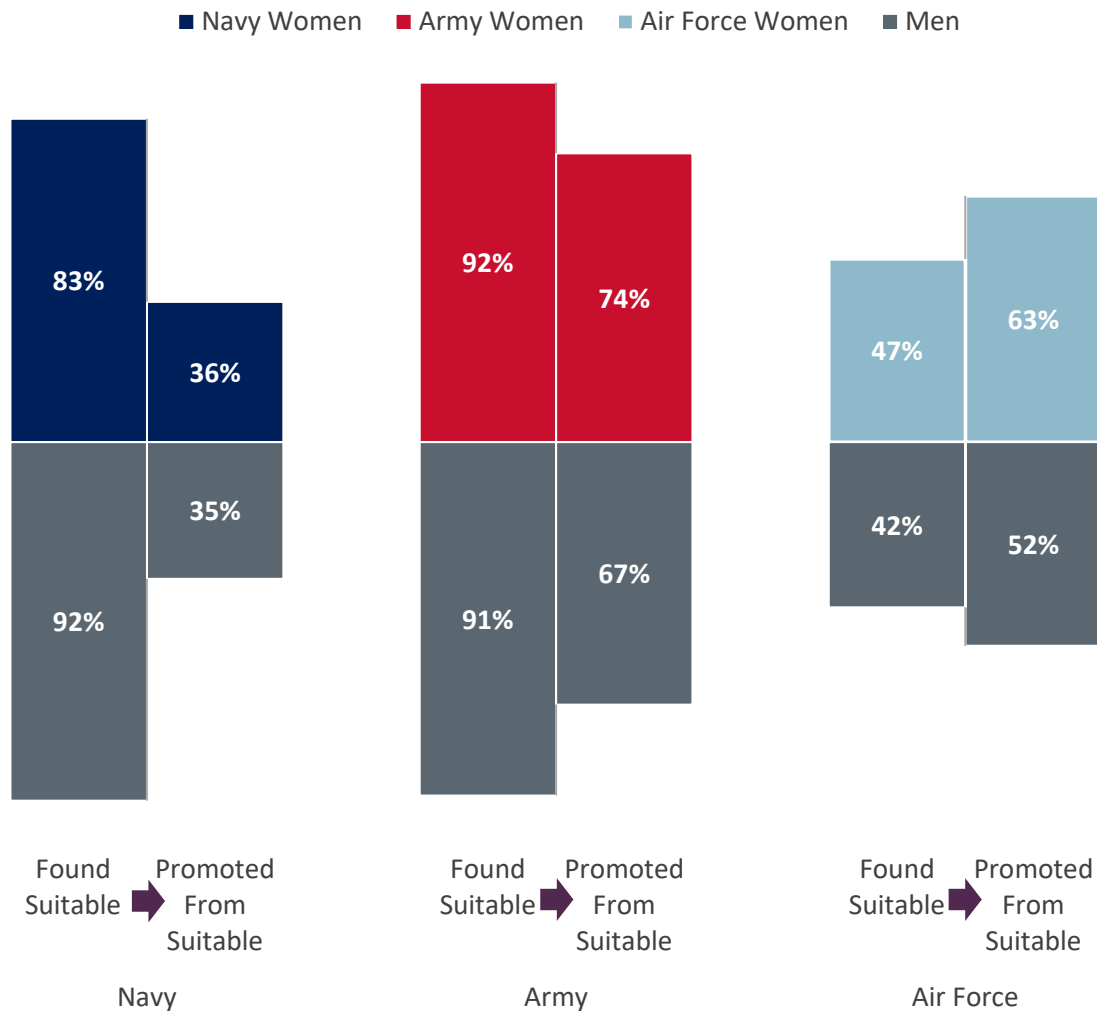


Figure 24 Percentage of eligible population found suitable for promotion (left) and of those suitable that were promoted (right) in 2023-24

Women in Senior Leadership Positions

Lived Experience

Continuation of career planning should include family planning for those striving for command but also seek to have children. Army Junior Officer, woman, 25-29 years old

Table 47 shows the percentage of women in Senior and Junior cohorts for Officer and Other Ranks.⁷⁴ The percentages of Senior Officer and Senior Other Rank women is impacted not only by structural factors that influence promotions and progression but factors such as retention and the composition of the ADF over time. Years with lower percentages of women will flow through the ranks, impacting the cohort's percentages, and cannot be addressed retroactively. Ideally women would be represented proportionally at each rank level through to senior leadership levels. The percentage of women in the senior rank cohort (O06-O10/ E06-E10) is smaller than the junior rank cohort (O01-O05/E01-E05) for Officers and Other Ranks.

Table 43 Representation of Women by Rank Cohort and Service in 2023-24

Service	O0	Junior Officer (O01 - O05)	Senior Officer (O06 - O10)	E0	Senior OR (E06 - E10)	Junior OR (E01 - E05)
Navy	28.0%	24.9%	20.0%	24.0%	26.4%	16.6%
Army	15.9%	18.7%	17.8%	12.9%	15.0%	12.3%
Air Force	32.6%	26.1%	17.8%	35.6%	31.2%	24.4%
Total ADF	24.4%	22.9%	18.5%	19.3%	21.5%	14.9%

⁷⁴ This is the same data as presented in KPI 1 with the addition of the O0 and E0 cohorts.

KPI 13: Women feel equally included in the ADF

Key Findings for KPI 13

- The percentage of women who feel their team is inclusive is smaller for women than men. This is consistent across the Services and for the ADF overall.
- The rate of incidents per 1,000 members was higher for women than men in 2023-24. However, the rate of incidents notifiable to Comcare was higher for men than women.
- The rate of psychosocial injury was also higher for women at 5.9 incidents per 1,000 employees compared to 4.2 for men.

Inclusion and belonging

The Team Inclusivity Scale measures respondents' perceptions of the team dynamic within their work area. Inclusion occurs when people from diverse backgrounds feel valued and respected, have access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute their perspectives and talents to improve their organisation.

Approximately two-thirds of ADF women and almost three-quarters of ADF men feel their team is inclusive. Since last year, there has been no notable difference in team inclusivity.⁷⁵

Table 44 Team Inclusivity Scale⁷⁶

	ADF		Navy*		Army		Air Force*	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Strongly Agree / Agree	66.9%	72.1%	66.9%	72.4%	66.9%	72.4%	68.2%	73.2%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18.3%	16.6%	18.3%	16.4%	18.3%	16.4%	17.5%	16.7%
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	14.8%	11.3%	14.8%	11.3%	14.8%	11.3%	14.3%	10.1%

Note: Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between the percentage of men and women.

Work Health and Safety⁷⁷

Rate of incidents per 1000 employees

In the 2023-24 financial year, the rate of reported incidents per 1,000 employees was higher for women (135.5 reported incidents) than for men (125.2 reported incidents). However, the rate of reported incidents that were notifiable to Comcare per 1,000 employees was higher for men (3.1) than women (1.9). It is important to note that incidents do not necessarily result in injuries, because there are events that are classed as a 'Near Miss'. This suggests that although women have a higher report rate of work health and safety incidents, the probability of sustaining severe injuries may be lower. Of

⁷⁵ A notable difference here is defined as at least 5 percentage point change.

⁷⁶ Data are from the YourSay Workplace Experience Survey. Results are a percentage of positive responses (Agree and Strongly agree). For more information, visit the DPIR intranet page (internal to Defence) or contact the research team at Your.Say@defence.gov.au.

⁷⁷ This section uses report incident data from Sentinel, WHSMIS, and STARS (WHS reporting systems)

the injuries experienced by women, 31% related to traumatic joints, ligaments, and muscles or tendons compared to 26% for men.

Overall, the percentage of ADF members involved in reported WHS incidents has decreased by 11 percentage points over the last five financial years.⁷⁸ Men had a larger decrease than women (12 percentage points compared to 7 percentage points). In 2023-24, there was a 10-percentage point increase in the percentage of ADF members involved in reported incidents. This increase was larger for men than women (12 percentage points compared to 5 percentage points). This increase in reported injuries should be monitored in the next financial year to determine if this increase is an anomaly or suggests a pattern.

Nature of injury

Women reported experiencing body stressing related injuries at a rate of 49.0 per 1,000 employees compared to 37.1 for men. Falls, trips, and slips occurred at a rate of 6.9 per 1,000 employees for women compared to 4.2 for men.⁷⁹ The rate of reported psychosocial injury was also higher for women at 5.9 reported incidents per 1,000 employees compared to 4.2 for men. This is consistent with the psychosocial safety climate related findings in KPI 11 as a larger percentage of women than men were in the higher risk psychosocial safety climate risk categories. Defence has worked to increase awareness of psychosocial safety in the past 12 months.

⁷⁸ Each involved person does not necessarily represent a unique individual as one person may be involved in multiple incidents.

⁷⁹ This includes a broad range of injury severity.

Conclusion

The ADF aims to grow the size of the force to meet the increasingly complex and challenging demands of the strategic environment and the range of emerging threats and challenges. A larger and more capable ADF is essential for maintaining security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. The 2024 Defence Workforce Plan outlines key three lines of effort for the ADF workforce: stabilise, remediate, and grow. Supporting women's participation, addressing barriers for retention, and increasing the recruitment of women will be critical for achieving these outcomes.

In 2023-24, the Australian Defence Force reached 20.7% women, Navy was 24.1% women, Army maintained their participation of women at 15.3%, and Air Force reached 27.0% women. The previous pace of growth would have made it hard to reach 2030 targets for women's participation, but there have been indications of positive change in 2025. An underachievement in recruitment targets for women would sustain the current workforce imbalances. In 2023-24, Navy reached 32% of their recruitment target for women and 70% for men, Army reached 31% of their target for women and 64% of their target for men, and Air Force reached 72% of their target for men and 86% of their target for men. Across the different avenues for entry, there were many that exceeded their targets.

Critical mass has been reached in some workforce segments and services, and the difficulty of increasing women's participation in the remaining workforce segments may vary. Defence could investigate an approach to target lower effort, higher yield segments in the short-term while implementing long-term strategies for the segments more challenging to change. Critical mass it is an important threshold that when reached enhances an organisation's culture, opening up opportunities for change that benefit everyone and not just the minority group.

Alongside increasing the percentage of women in the ADF, there needs to be commensurate increases in women in senior ranks and leadership. Currently, women are represented in larger percentages at Junior ranks compared to Senior ranks. However, this change will take time as there are positive changes visible in the data. In 2023-24, women had a lower separation rate than men but had a shorter length of service at the time of separation. Retention strategies are needed to ensure that women remain in service long enough to reach senior ranks.

Increasing support for the use of flexible work arrangements (FWA) and flexible service arrangements (FSA) for all personnel could positively impact retention, particularly for women. Providing flexibility in work and service arrangements can make it easier for members to balance their work and personal commitments. This is particularly beneficial for women, as they tend to have more caring commitments. Women use formal and informal flexible work arrangements at a higher than men. Access to FWA and FSA have a positive impact on women's intention to stay in Defence but there are large percentages of members who are concerned that using such arrangements will negatively impact their career or that they would not be supported by their unit. SERCAT 6 arrangements seem to be used at very low rates and this could potentially be improved. There is a decrease in the percentage of women compared to men who are retained 5 and 7 years after taking maternity or parental leave. Increasing use of FWA and FSA such as SERCAT 6 could be important for the retention of women in particular.

The nature of work in Defence can pose challenges for FWA but members should feel supported to discuss potential flexible work arrangements. Members may be retained through flexible work and service arrangements such as the use of SERCAT 6, work from home, and flexible work hours.

Looking Forward

Next year's report will have an expanded focus on:

- Critical mass and Defence's carrying capacity for women's participation,
- Achievable and realistic targets for select workforce segments,
- Flexible work and service arrangements, and
- The Total Workforce System (TWS) and particularly SERCAT 6.