Australian Government
Defence

Women in the ADF Report 2024-25



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Requests and inquiries should be addressed to:

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

A Guide to the Refreshed Report

Why refresh the Women in the ADF report?

The original purpose of the Women in the ADF (WiADF) Report, as per Recommendation 3 from the 'Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force',[5] was to "publically report on the progress of the implementation of the Review's recommendations and key metrics". The intent was also to provide the ADF with metrics by which to track progress over time against a baseline, identify problem areas and take corrective action. As the Review was more than a decade ago now, and the Report has evolved alongside changing workforce circumstances, it is timely to reconsider the purpose and content of the Report for the audiences it serves.

The 2024 Defence Workforce Plan included the continuation of the WiADF Report as an action under Strategic Task Seven – 'Improved Culture, Mental Health and Wellbeing'. Action 7.9 states: *'Defence will continue to deliver the annual Women in ADF Report to support gender equality, more women in leadership positions, more women on boards, and greater flexible work arrangements. Defence aims to achieve an overall increase in the participation of women, achieving 25% representation in the permanent ADF by 2030."*

Renewed Purpose

Renewed Purpose for the Report
The WiADF Report provides the Australian public with an overview of women's pathways and experiences throughout their time in the Australian Defence Force. It is an avenue for transparency through the regular reporting of data and tracking of change over time. The Report will select a key focus each year to highlight an area of gendered experience in the ADF.

This purpose statement reinforces the audience as the Australian public and that the core goal is transparency. Inclusion of a key focus each year will provide flexibility to include additional topics covering current organisational focus or relevant research.

Changes to the KPI

Previous WiADF Reports were focused around the thirteen Key Performance Indicators which have been reorganised and revised into **six themes** (see Figure 1).

Data used in the Report

Data within this report has predominantly been drawn from the HR Data Warehouse (HRDW), which is the centralised source of personnel (workforce or human resource) data. Reported data reflects the data at the time of extraction – this means reports run on another date may produce different numbers due to the processing of retrospective inputs.

Survey data comes from the YourSay Workplace Experience (YSWE) and Workplace Behaviour Surveys (WBS), which are administered at least once per year to give a high-level overview of key workplace experience indicators. The response rate in 2025 was 17% for the YSWE and 16% for WBS, which are consistent with academic research into typical survey response rates.[6] Although people in disconnected environments may not have the opportunity to complete surveys, response rates by location generally reflect the distribution of service personnel throughout Australia. Confidence in the data is further supported by validity (that the survey is measuring what it is intended to), and reliability (gives similar results unless something has genuinely changed).

[5] https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/adf-audit-2014.pdf

[6] Münnich, Á., Kocsis, M., Mainwaring, M.C. et al. Interview completed: the application of survival analysis to detect factors influencing response rates in online surveys. Journal of Marketing Analysis 13, 202–217 (2025). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41270-023-00282-y

Navigating the Report

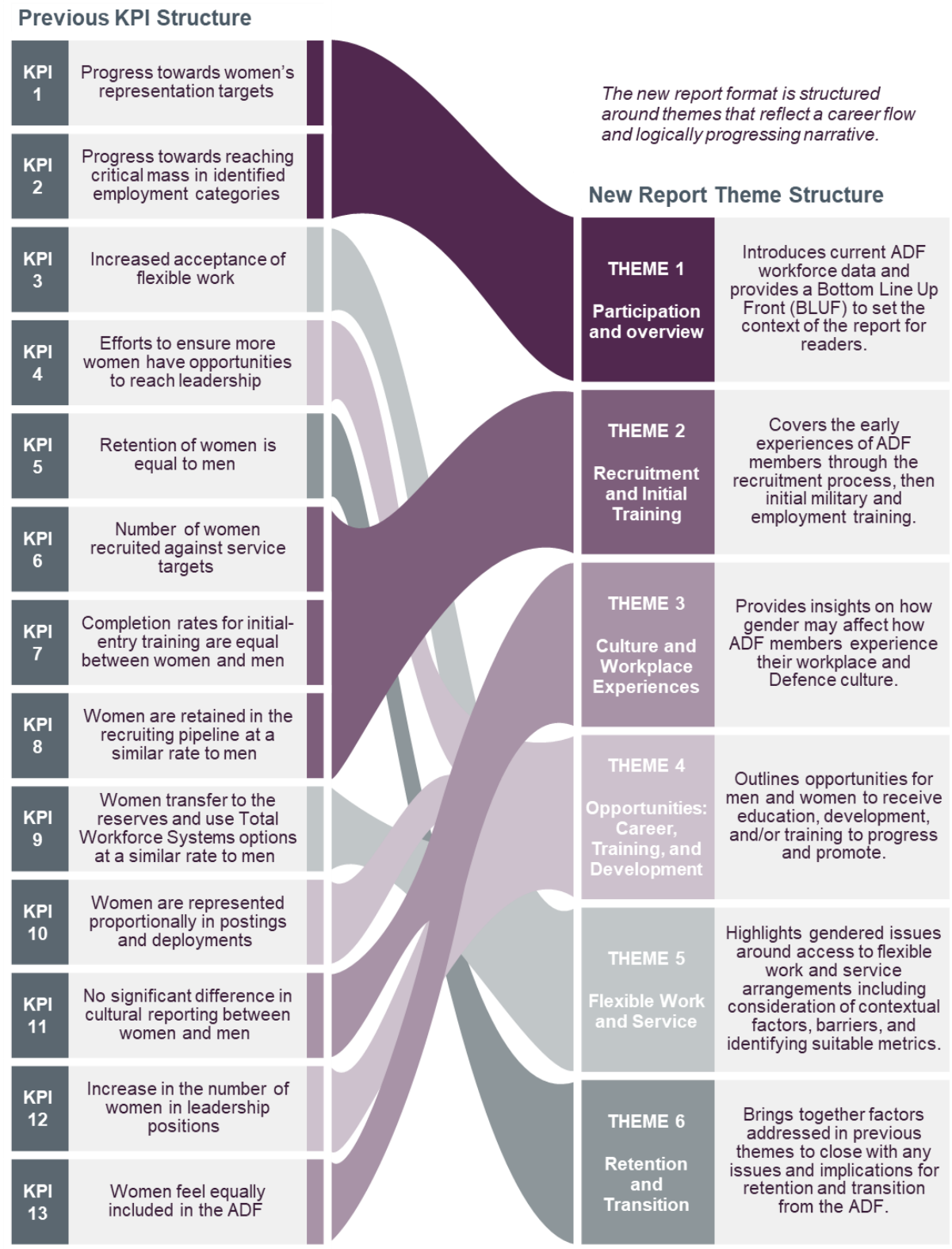

Figure 1 Transition from the Current to Future Report Structure

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Executive Summary

The Women in the ADF Report for 2024–25 provides a comprehensive assessment of progress against key performance indicators (KPIs) across six strategic themes: participation and overview; recruitment and initial training; culture and workplace experiences; opportunities (career, training, and development); flexible work and service; and retention and transition. While the ADF continues to demonstrate commitment to gender equity, results indicate progress in a number of areas (albeit some of these incremental), the results also indicate ongoing challenges in other areas, and identify several areas requiring further attention.

The workforce achievements section highlights several significant achievements by ADF women in 2024-25. Each year, based on Service participation rates and when compared with ADF men, a high proportion of ADF women are consistently receiving – and being nominated for - honours and awards.

During 2024-25, women's participation in the Permanent Force (Service category (SERCAT) 6 and 7) remained broadly stable compared to the previous financial year, with Navy and Air Force recording modest increases. While short-term retention following parental leave is strong, gender gaps widen over time, particularly at the five- and seven-year mark post-leave. Length of service differences also remain, with men serving longer than women across most categories. Participation in Reserve Forces (SERCAT 3 to 5) improved slightly for Navy and Air Force, while Army remained stable. Representation of women in senior officer ranks remains broadly aligned with overall participation for the ADF and Army, however women continue to be underrepresented at senior other ranks. Recruitment targets were not met for several entry pathways for men or women. There was typically higher proportional achievement of targets for men than for women. Conversion ratios between application stages revealed higher attrition rates for women early in the process, suggesting barriers for women's entry into the ADF.

Within the eight workforce segments (Aviation; Combat & Security; Communications & Cyber; Engineering, Maintenance, & Construction; Enterprise & Command Support; Health; Intelligence; and Logistics), women maintained strong representation in four (Logistics, Intelligence, Enterprise & Command Support, and Health), with participation typically exceeding or close to 25%. In addition, there have been increases in some workforce segments, for example in Aviation (0.2 percentage point increase) and Engineering, Maintenance & Construction (0.4 percentage point increase). However, participation in the remaining two segments where women have historically had a lower propensity to serve (Combat & Security and Communications & Cyber)—remained low (10.4% and 17.5% respectively). The Communications and Cyber segment had a decline (0.3 percentage point decrease) while Combat & Security was stable (no change). Improvements in women's participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics based roles will require societal change to women's participation in STEM.

The ADF has a smaller gender pay gap overall compared to the national average according to the ABS National Pay Gap. Army achieved a reduction in its pay gap, while Navy and Air Force remained stable or saw minor increases. This underscores Defence's relative strength in pay equity with pay based on role not the individual, however complexities emerge when accounting for other forms of remuneration such as allowances due to their variability across the ADF and changes each year.

Workplace experience survey results again showed gender differences in perceptions of senior leadership, supervisor leadership, and morale. Women were more positive than men in perceptions of senior leadership. Significantly larger percentages of men (76.6%) than women (65.6%) were in the low risk category based on their Psychosocial Safety Climate scale scores.

Flexible work arrangements emerged as a critical area of opportunity. Women consistently expressed more positive views about the benefits of flexible service options, particularly in relation to career opportunities and work-life balance. These arrangements appear to be a key retention lever, yet uptake disparities and concerns about career impact persist.

Next Steps

Annually, the Report will have a key area of focus, which will provide flexibility to include additional topics covering current organisational focus or relevant research (e.g. the Australian Human Rights

Commission (AHRC) research projects or the Defence and Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Women's Veteran Strategy. The first five topics 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

A dedicated focus on each topic has the potential to offer key insights about women's recruitment, participation, and/or retention. For example, early insights from the Serving Women's Health (SWH) project highlight that service women experience distinct and compounding health and wellbeing challenges driven by cultural, organisational and occupational factors within Defence. These challenges directly influence participation, readiness, retention and long-term career outcomes. Recognising women's health as a capability issue, not just a wellbeing matter, is critical to achieving Defence's workforce, culture and leadership goals, and will therefore be an area of focus for the Report in 2026. Similarly, societal-level gendered STEM engagement (the topic for 2028) affects overall recruitment and participation, hence requiring a dedicated research effort and focus.

The overarching topic for this Report is '**Growing Participation'**. Defence is committed to increasing the size of the ADF but also further supporting women's participation. This first theme (Participation and Overview) provides a snapshot of the core data for women's participation and this is then expanded on in the other themes. Women's participation goes beyond headcounts and is built through feeling supported to thrive in the workforce. The recruitment process and initial training are an ADF member's first steps into participating in the ADF. It is where they learn about what a Defence career can offer, about values and behaviours expected of them, and through their training they become a member of the ADF. Themes 3 through 6 address matters that can support and encourage women's active and meaningful participation in the ADF such as opportunities for further education, operational deployments, formal recognition through honours and awards, and flexible work and service arrangements to support work-life balance.

Workforce Successes and Workforce Initiatives

Recognising members' successes is vital to ensuring workplace wellbeing and retention. Below are a number of success stories from each Service as well as key workforce initiatives for 2024-25.

Service Success Stories

Navy

In 2024, Navy was well represented in the Australian Defence Magazine's Women in Defence Awards. Thirty-three women were nominated in various categories. Of the 33 nominees, eight had been chosen as finalists, with one winner being awarded Rising Star at the celebratory gala dinner. This continued forward into 2025 with Navy submitting 13 nominees, five of which were chosen as finalists, with four winners being awarded for the categories of Executive Management, Engineering, ICT & Cyber and Technical Trade.

Throughout 2025, Navy has continued to see success with the Navy Women's Mentoring Program (initial inception was in July 2020). The program is on its sixth round of mentoring with Data from Mentorloop from the past two years showing that 172 individuals, including 13 male participants, are currently participating in the program, seeking and offering support in the professional development and parenting streams. This program will expand to add a stream for Menopause and Women's Health in 2026 in order to provide ongoing support to members during critical times that can have significant career impacts.

Army

Army continues its strong commitment to women's participation growth through sustained focus on structural and cultural initiatives designed to improve outcomes for all soldiers. This is demonstrated in the measurable progress and strong recognition of women's contributions across Army. Army women continue to be recognised for their contributions to Defence and Army. During the reporting period, Army women received honours and awards, in three out of four reported categories, at rates higher than women's Service participation rates. The strong performance of Army women across these recognition pathways, indicate both the depth of talent and the effectiveness of Army's development pathways that support women to thrive and lead.

The achievements of individual Army women continue to highlight Army Women's contribution to Defence and Army capability. Recent recognition includes:

- Representation in national awards programs such as the Australian Defence Magazine Women in Defence Awards where Army women continue to be finalists and category winners across all domains,
- Strong leadership contributions across health capability logistics and Army training environments, and
- Recognition through the Jonathan Church Award and Conspicuous Service Medal acknowledging exemplary service soldiering and leadership

These individual achievements demonstrate how Army's leadership development systems, professional education pathways and Army's culture are enabling women to contribute at all levels of Defence. Other achievements for Army include a reduction in the gender pay gap of 0.9% (0.7 percentage points lower than 2023-24 when it was 1.6%), which is lower than the national ABS base salary pay gap of 11.5%. Army has also exceeded its target for recruitment of Reserve women officers this reporting period. This reflects sustained work in the attraction and recruitment of women.

Air Force

The Air Force Aviation Program (AFAP) for Women is facilitated by the Directorate of Organisational Behaviour & Culture – Air Force, Diversity and Inclusion team in partnership with the Defence Work Experience Program. The program is designed to raise the Air Force profile as an employer of choice for women. AFAP provides a five day residential, hands-on, low risk, experiential opportunity for women aged 15-24 to gain familiarity with Air Force job roles. Six programs are delivered across three Air Force bases annually, accommodating up to 16 participants per program for a total reach of 96 young women each year. Applications for the 2025 programs totalled 250 and resulted in a highly competitive selection process for the identification of successful participants. Participants are exposed to up to fifty unique job roles within Air Force on each experiential program. The Air Force Aviation Program for Women has a proven success rate, with women who participated in the program in their youth successfully joining the Air Force or broader defence industry as a result. Self-identification of women who have participated in AFAP, strongly reflect an increased presence of women in previously under-represented job roles including Pilot, Life Support Fitter, Avionics Technician, Air Traffic Control, GSE, Security Forces, Logistics Officer, Loadmaster, Aeronautical Engineering, Air Intelligence Officer, Geospatial Intelligence just to name a few. Of the six programs in the 2025 AFAP series, 93% of participants planned to submit an application to ADF Careers in pursuit of a career within Air Force.

Key Workforce Initiatives in 2024-25

ADF

In December 2024, the final report was delivered for the Women in the Officer Aviation Workforce project conducted in conjunction with the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC). This project examined the full work lifecycle of women in the Officer Aviation (OA) workforce from attraction to separation through focus groups, interviews, and a review of Defence data, policies, and relevant literature. This was done to identify how the ADF can increase the participation of, and improve outcomes for, women in the OA workforce. Findings covered the factors that negatively impact OA careers and found that they are underpinned by gender inequality. Recommendations were developed through the AHRC and Steering Committee discussing project findings, participant recommendations

for change, and the good practice actions that can address underlying causes. Although the report focused on women in OA roles, the findings and recommendations apply to many Defence roles and have the potential to improve the experience and increase the participation of women in Defence. Work has commenced to progress recommendation implementation and is being undertaken in conjunction with related RCDVS recommendations.

A tri-service collaboration took place between Navy, Army and Air Force to design an ADF Capability conference, held in March 2025. The conference included representatives from across Defence, as well as external keynote speakers who specialised in culture and diversity. These synchronised efforts explored how diversity and inclusive practices enhance warfighting capability, workforce resilience and military effectiveness. The conference provided an opportunity for attendees to hear insights from subject matter experts on how to achieve organisational outcomes that align with Defence's broader strategic goals and how each Service contributed to the National Defence Strategy 2024.

Navy

Navy established a presence and supported members experiencing difficulties in accessing to Defence systems due to their work environments (e.g. limited computer access on ships). This was achieved by creating a professional development and information resource on the Horizon platform. This new page includes access to the Navy Women's Mentoring Program, lived experiences provided by the Navy Diversity Reference Group – Women (DRG-W) members and other resources to support members and maintain valuable connections outside of the standard work environment.

In 2025, Navy offered ten women the opportunity to participate in the AYA Women in STEM IMPACT Leadership Program, as a Navy Women Development Program initiative to retain high-performing women in the pipeline to senior leadership. The program was tailored to support the leadership development of women working in the STEM industry, assisting them to reach their potential as experts and impactful leaders. The 10 members were from critical categories and STEM based roles in aviation and engineering. In addition, Navy supported two female members in attending the Women UNLIMITED Leadership Summit in order to develop personally and professionally. This initiative will continue into 2026 where the Navy Women team will keep identifying opportunities that are scalable and extend to a wider audience.

Army

During the reporting period, Army's workforce initiatives centred on strengthening capability, culture and readiness with a focus on the integrated environment. As an example, Army partnered with Navy and Air Force in the design and delivery of the inaugural ADF Capability Conference held in Feb 25. Army resourced and led elements of the Conference, with facilitated discussions on the connection between inclusion, culture, leadership and warfighting capability.

Army also continues to support the Air Force Maternity and Extended Leave Support (MELS) program with an embedded Army MELS coordinator within the network to enabled cross service coordination and improve access to service specific information and support. This joint approach has strengthened workforce support across the integrated environment and contributed to broader retention and support priorities for serving parents.

Army further advanced inclusion and workforce development through the Defence- Australian Human Rights Commission Collaboration. This partnership has led to the generation of workforce intelligence to better understand the experiences of serving women and the service conditions that enable women's participation across Army workforce segments. Insights from this work are informing Army's organisational responses to key strategic objectives relating to women's participation.

Air Force

Air Force re-established the Business Speaking Workshops in 2024 -2025 in support of capability though Diversity and Inclusion. The workshops were delivered across six Air Force bases to over 100 women from different backgrounds, ranks, roles and musterings. The one-day in person workshops delivered by Catherine McGrath Media focussed on supporting women to build their leadership confidence authority and skill in professional situations and environments. The initiative is being expanded to provide opportunities for workshop graduates to further develop their skills by assisting in the delivery of briefs and in-service presentations.

The Air Force Maternity and Extended Leave Support (MELS) program commenced in 2024 as a maternity support initiative designed to assist both command and Air Force members from initial pregnancy planning, maternity leave, through to two years post-partum. The MELS program was established to provide clear guidance on maternity, paternity and return to work policies, address inconsistent application of entitlements, and better support commanders in navigating these processes to strengthen retention and member welfare. The intent was scoped by feedback from members on extended absence for maternity leave and their supervisors, and subsequent enterprise data related to post - Maternity Leave retention trends. The initial concept matured and expanded to a number of Air Force bases and broadened its inclusions in response to feedback from participants and supervisory chains. Air Force members can access one-on-one coaching sessions with a MELS Coordinator at RAAF bases across four major regions with support focussed on helping individuals and their chain of command to navigate maternity and paternity entitlements, and health and financial considerations. The MELS coordinators provide expert advice in the relevant personnel and health system policies, including the provision of support for returning to work after childbirth. From July 2024 to June 2025, the MELS team assisted with over 170 individual support cases, from general enquiries to complex welfare support.

MELS expanded in 2025 to facilitate virtual, recorded information sessions, covering topics of interest to the MELS audience such as post-partum fitness, superannuation and Defence Member and Family Support (DMFS), enhancing accessibility and awareness across the Defence community. The program also fosters connection and community through the ADF Members in Uniform Support (MUMS) social media group and the internal MELS ForceNet page, which for the former, expanded to 869 active members by June 2025, generating an average of 40 posts and one individual support case per month. These online groups serve as platforms for peer support, information sharing, and engagement across the ADF.

In 2024-2025, Air Force also continued its accreditation by the Australian Breastfeeding Association as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace - the first military organisation in the world to do so. This accreditation, held since 2014, has supported extant policies and a framework across Air Force that not only fully supports, but also encourages breastfeeding women to return to work.

Joint Capabilities Group

Joint Capabilities Group (JCG) continues to pave the way for women in capability management, demonstrating how inclusive, collaborative leadership enhances Defence's ability to deliver complex, multi-agency programs. With strong representation of women at all levels, JCG sets a benchmark for capability stewardship, integration and professionalism across Defence's most significant transformation initiatives. This commitment is mirrored across JP2060 Phase 4, where women are in critical roles not only in JCG but across partner agencies including Defence Digital Group (DDG). Women are contributing leadership in program governance, project management, clinical advisory functions and key technical subject matter expert roles. Together, these leaders form a highly effective, collaborative leadership cohort that strengthens program cohesion and elevates Defence capability outcomes.

This collaboration is exemplified in JP2060 Phase 4, which is delivering Health Knowledge Management (HKM), this is the largest digital health transformation spanning Defence, DVA, CSC and other partner government agencies. It is guided by women as program leads at both the JCG and DDG levels, and supported by strong female representation across project management, clinical design, technical subject matter experts, engineering and data architecture. The program is fundamentally reshaping how health information is captured, shared and safeguarded across the Defence and veteran ecosystem. The program is also driving a significant uplift to ICT systems and cyber domain resilience, ensuring modernised, secure and interoperable digital health capabilities that meet Defence's evolving cyber and information assurance requirements.

Theme 1: Participation and Overview

This theme provides an overview of the growth in women's participation since the previous year through workforce data. This includes the percentages of women at a Service-level and down into workforce segments and across ranks. Inclusion of a gender pay gap analysis shows the gap in remuneration for participation and how this compares positively to the wider Australian workforce.

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.

Targets have been set for women's Permanent Force participation with a goal end date of 2030. These are:

- 25% for the ADF,
- 26.5% for Navy,
- 17% for Army, and
- 32% for Air Force.

Targets will continue to be reviewed, including in the context of the inflow of men and women into the ADF and achievement of gender targets.

Over the last five years, there has been growth in women's participation in the Permanent Force across Services (Figure 2). In 2024-25, women's participation in the ADF and Army remained steady when compared to the previous financial year, with Navy and Air Force each having a 0.2 percentage point increase.

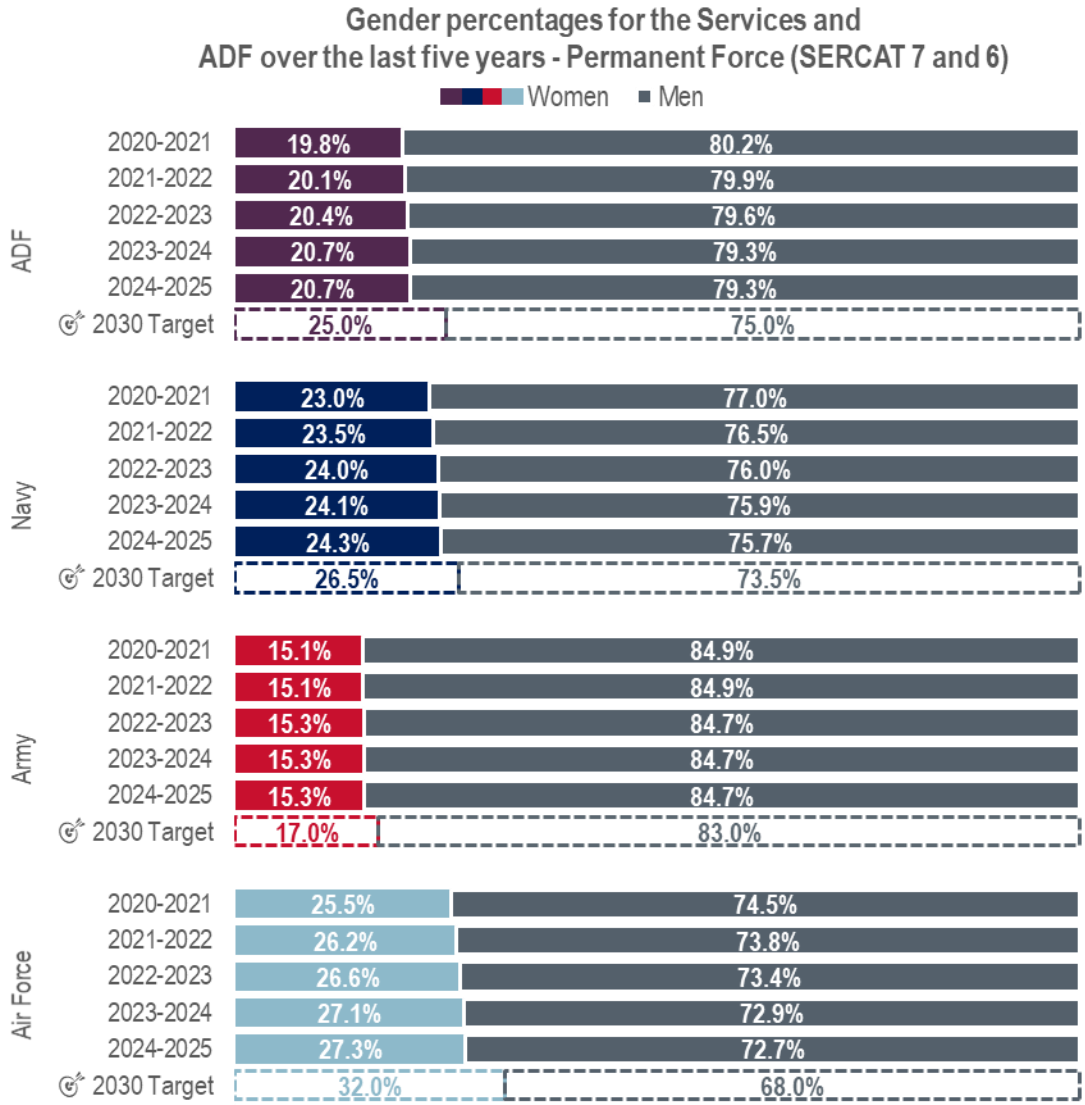


Figure 2 Gender percentages for the Services and Permanent ADF over the past five years

Note: This includes only SERCAT 6 & 7 (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 to protect privacy they have not been included in the above graph or in the report more broadly.

There has been growth in women's participation in the Permanent ADF (Table 1) and the Reserve Force (Table 2) over the last five years. In 2024-25, the percentage of women in the Reserve Force (SERCAT 3 to 5) increased for Navy and Air Force (both increased 0.4 percentage points) and remained broadly stable for Army (0.1 percentage point decrease).

Table 1 Permanent Headcounts for the Services and ADF over the past five years

	Navy		Army		Air Force		ADF	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
2020-2021	3519	11762	4456	24985	3799	11082	**11774**	**47829**
2021-2022	3514	11435	4291	24097	3888	10961	**11693**	**46493**
2022-2023	3535	11204	4232	23485	3953	10922	**11720**	**45611**
2023-2024	3557	11181	4171	23060	4127	11127	**11855**	**45368**
2024-2025	3675	11454	4241	23456	4387	11694	**12303**	**46604**

Table 2 Reserve Headcounts for the Services and ADF over the past five years

	Navy		Army		Air Force		ADF	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
2020-2021	884	3021	3116	16994	1231	4372	**5231**	**24387**
2021-2022	958	3266	3298	17448	1341	4647	**5597**	**25361**
2022-2023	1060	3440	3409	17617	1422	4936	**5891**	**25993**
2023-2024	1121	3470	3447	17916	1451	4850	**6019**	**26236**
2024-2025	1173	3566	3536	18583	1486	4853	**6195**	**27002**

Table 3 Percentages of Women for the Reserve ADF (SERCAT 3 to 5) over the past five years by Service

	Navy	Army	Air Force	ADF
2020-21	22.6%	15.5%	22.0%	**17.7%**
2021-22	22.7%	15.9%	22.4%	**18.1%**
2022-23	23.6%	16.2%	22.4%	**18.5%**
2023-24	24.4%	16.1%	23.0%	**18.7%**
2024-25	24.8%	16.0%	23.4%	**18.7%**

Participation in workforce segments

Critical mass is the participation threshold where, when reached, a minority group is able to influence 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.[7] This can improve the institution, open up opportunities for women, and enhance the organisation's culture. For the ADF, 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: Aviation; Combat & Security; Communications & Cyber; Engineering, Maintenance, & Construction; Enterprise & Command Support; Health; Intelligence; and Logistics.

All Services are striving for critical mass at both the Service and workforce segment levels (see Table 2 for 2024-25 participation levels). Notably, the impact on Service participation is not the same for all workforce segments, as different workforce segments have different numbers of personnel. Similarly, the strategies required to increase participation in a particular workforce segment are likely to vary depending on the workforce segment. This makes direct comparison complex.

[7] Kanter, R.M. (1977). Some Effects of Proportions on Group Life: Skewed Sex Ratios and Responses to Token Women. American Journal of Sociology, 82, 965 - 990.

Table 4 Women's Participation by Workforce Segment 2024-25 – Permanent Force (SERCAT 6-7) and Reserve (SERCAT 3-5)

		Navy		Army		Air Force		ADF	
Segment	Force	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Aviation	Permanent	17.1%	82.9%	10.3%	89.7%	18.1%	81.9%	16.6%	83.4%
		113	547	81	703	553	2505	747	3755
	Reserve	6.1%	93.9%	6.5%	93.5%	10.6%	89.4%	9.2%	90.8%
		10	154	22	315	108	907	140	1376
Combat & Security	Permanent	20.7%	79.3%	4.6%	95.4%	24.6%	75.4%	20.7%	89.6%
		783	3002	477	9841	359	1101	1619	13944
	Reserve	17.9%	82.1%	5.9%	94.1%	21.3%	78.7%	7.9%	92.1%
		163	748	624	9924	193	711	980	11383
Communications & Cyber	Permanent	31.2%	68.8%	10.4%	89.6%	15.5%	84.5%	17.5%	82.5%
		431	951	253	2171	148	809	832	3931
	Reserve	30.6%	69.4%	14.7%	85.3%	15.4%	84.6%	17.5%	82.5%
		113	256	217	1261	43	236	373	1753
Engineering, Maintenance, & Construction	Permanent	10.0%	90.0%	5.6%	94.4%	12.5%	87.5%	9.7%	90.3%
		514	4625	226	3800	645	4522	1385	12947
	Reserve	8.4%	62.9%	4.4%	95.6%	4.5%	95.5%	5.6%	94.4%
		344	584	73	1579	75	1596	258	4369
Enterprise & Command Support	Permanent	51.4%	48.6%	36.7%	63.3%	61.5%	39.4%	47.4%	52.6%
		528	500	920	1584	948	616	2432	2700
	Reserve	37.1%	54.8%	34.3%	65.7%	46.3%	53.7%	37.7%	62.3%
		194	235	925	1774	526	609	1795	2967
Health	Permanent	57.3%	42.7%	50.4%	49.6%	62.0%	38.0%	54.6%	45.4%
		401	299	854	839	432	265	1687	1403
	Reserve	45.2%	54.8%	41.0%	59.0%	46.6%	53.4%	42.9%	57.1%
		194	235	612	881	222	254	1028	1370
Intelligence	Permanent	37.8%	62.2%	22.1%	77.9%	36.7%	63.3%	31.2%	68.8%
		319	524	316	1111	493	851	1128	2486
	Reserve	34.6%	65.4%	19.5%	80.5%	35.1%	64.9%	26.9%	73.1%
		90	170	128	528	120	222	338	920
Logistics	Permanent	36.8%	63.2%	24.6%	75.4%	43.0%	57.0%	31.3%	68.7%
		586	1006	1114	3407	773	1025	2473	5438
	Reserve	39.9%	60.1%	28.7%	71.3%	38.5%	61.5%	30.9%	69.1%
		149	224	935	2321	199	318	1283	2863

The ADF's ability to attract and recruit women is heavily affected by demand in other industries/occupations combined with availability, propensity and eligibility to serve. Policies related to workforce segments drive the roles in the ADF that women can access; for example, the removal of gender restrictions on combat roles in 2013 and introduction of direct entry into combat roles in 2016.

Women's inclination towards roles and workforce segments must also be acknowledged. The greater the percentage of roles that appeal to women, the higher the carrying capacity or steady state. This appeal is driven by factors such as social and cultural drivers, recruitment strategies, and retention which create a complex web of influences for carrying capacity. The headcount and size of these roles is also relevant as overall participation percentages are influenced by the appeal of roles within the largest workforce segments (this will be explored in the 2026-27 Report's theme). Accordingly, Defence is pursuing increased gender diversification across strategic workforce segments as part of the overall growth trajectory in meeting National Defence Strategy outcomes.

Gender Pay Gap

What is a Gender Pay Gap?

The Australian Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) defines the gender pay gap (GPG) as "*a measure of how we value the contribution of men and women in the workforce. Expressed as a percentage or a dollar figure it shows the difference between the earnings of women and men*".[8] These are not comparisons of like roles but reflect the difference in pay of women in men across an organisation or industry. It is important to recognise that across the ADF, men and women in the same roles are paid the same amount based on their seniority.

Defence's Gender Pay Gap

This gender pay gap is based on the average actual salaries of men and women in each Service and excludes allowances. It is calculated from the average salary of men minus the average salary of women. The difference is then expressed as a percentage of the average salary of men. Positive percentages indicate that the average salary is higher for men (while negative numbers would indicate a higher average salary for women). This is similar to the Organisation-wide GPG analysis method used by WGEA.

Not factored into this gender pay gap analysis is distribution of bonuses, capability payments, and salary related allowances. These payments can and do contribute to the GPG. For example, when bonuses are paid predominantly to areas of the organisation with a higher percentage of men (e.g. technical trades), this can boost the average pay for men and widen the GPG. These have not been included as they vary between Services and years. This method provides a stable approach that can be used for year-on-year comparisons and to allow for comparisons with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Base Salary Gender Pay Gap.

Table 5 Gender Pay Gap based on Average Actual Salary by Service – Permanent Force only (SERCAT 6 and 7)

	2020-2021	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
ADF	**4.1%**	**4.3%**	**4.7%**	**4.3%**	**4.1%**
Navy	5.7%	5.6%	6.1%	5.6%	5.7%
Army	0.9%	1.6%	2.6%	1.6%	0.9%
Air Force	8.8%	8.8%	9.0%	8.8%	8.8%

Comparator Gender Pay Gaps – WGEA and the ABS

The method for calculating gender pay gap used by the WGEA includes base salary, overtime, bonuses and additional payments for private sector employees. They also include the annualised full-time equivalent salaries of casual and part-time workers. Using this method, in 2023-24 WGEA found that the mid-point of average gender pay gaps is **16.1% in men-dominated industries**, reducing to 13.2% in gender-balanced industries, and 5.5% in women-dominated industries.[9] [10] WGEA found in

[8] https://www.wgea.gov.au/the-gender-pay-gap accessed 02/09/2025 The Gender Pay Gap, WGEA
[9] 2024-25 WGEA figures were not yet available at time of writing.
[10] https://www.wgea.gov.au/pay-and-gender/gender-pay-gap-data accessed 02/09/2025

2023-24, **the public sector had an average gender pay gap of 6.4%** compared to 21.1% in the private sector.

Twice annually, ABS Survey of Average Weekly Earnings is used to calculate the national pay gap. This uses only base-salary for full-time workers and excludes part-time or casual workers, overtime, bonuses, and additional payments. The **May 2025 national pay gap according to the ABS is 11.5%**. This is a more relevant comparator for Defence than the full WGEA method due to the inclusion of only full-time employees and the similar exclusion criteria for the methods (to produce the pay gap in Table 5).

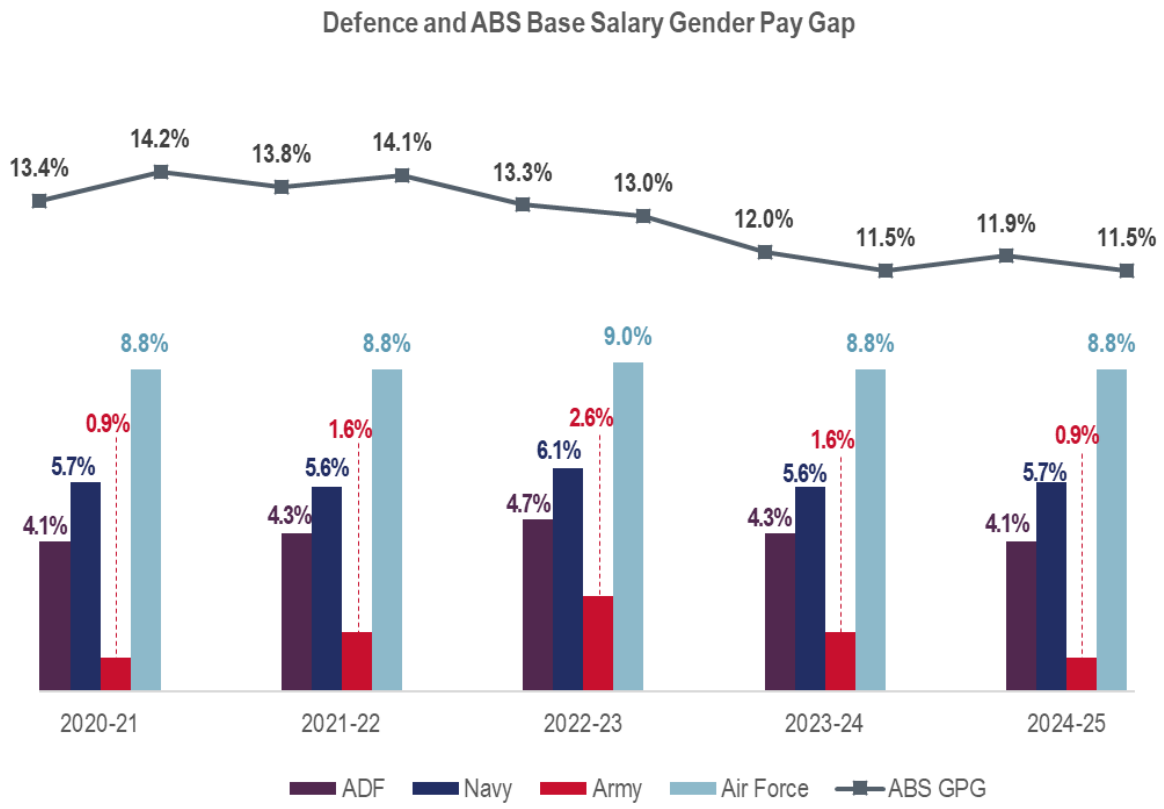


Figure 3 Defence and ABS Base Salary Gender Pay Gap 2020-21 to 2024-25

Reasons for variance in Gender Pay Gap

Higher rank in the ADF typically equates to higher salary (as do higher pay grades). While women are underrepresented in senior ranks, this will continue to contribute to the gender pay gap. Occupational gender participation differences are another contributing factor as men-dominated technical segments such as Aviation or Engineering, Maintenance and Construction often attract higher pay than those with higher participation by women such as Logistics. Industries often have different GPG (as mentioned previously about men-dominated industries having larger GPG than women-dominated industries). WGEA suggests this can partly be explained by industry profiles, for example Western Australia has a large share of mining and construction which has high earnings and is men-dominated. Defence employment ranges across a variety of industries and it is important to consider how the composition of the workforce (e.g. different segments, skills, trades) can impact the gender pay gap over time and between Services.

Representation at senior ranks

To increase women's participation in the ADF, it is important to ensure representation at senior ranks. Progression into senior ranks is a function of opportunities and promotion decisions, but also retention and length of service as it takes time to progress. Table 6 and Table 7 set out the representation at senior ranks in the Permanent Force and Reserve Force respectively.

Table 6 Representation of Women by Rank Cohort and Service in 2023-24 for Permanent Force

Rank Cohort	Navy		Army		Air Force		ADF	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Senior Officer (O06 – O10)	21.0%	79.0%	16.7%	83.3%	18.5%	81.5%	**18.7%**	**81.3%**
	61	230	52	259	51	224	**164**	**713**
Junior Officer (O01 – O05)	25.0%	75.0%	19.1%	80.9%	26.4%	73.6%	**23.2%**	**76.8%**
	918	2751	1087	4616	1416	3956	**3421**	**11323**
O00	29.3%	70.7%	16.8%	83.2%	31.0%	69.0%	**25.0%**	**75.0%**
	156	377	114	563	170	378	**440**	**1318**
Senior OR (E06 – E10)	16.7%	82.9%	13.1%	86.9%	18.3%	81.7%	**15.5%**	**84.5%**
	480	2332	623	4117	478	2140	**1581**	**8589**
Junior OR (E01 – E05)	26.6%	73.4%	14.7%	85.3%	31.4%	68.6%	**21.5%**	**78.5%**
	2008	5550	2286	13302	2213	4846	**6507**	**23698**
E00	18.3%	81.7%	11.6%	88.4%	28.2%	71.8%	**16.1%**	**83.9%**
	46	206	79	602	59	150	**184**	**958**

Note: O00 and E00 refer to trainee ranks.

Table 7 Representation of Women by Rank Cohort and Service in 2023-24 for Reserve Force

Rank Cohort	Navy		Army		Air Force		ADF	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Senior Officer (O06 – O10)	14.2%	85.8%	10.4%	89.6%	14.1%	85.9%	**12.5%**	**87.5%**
	39	236	49	423	42	255	**130**	**1044**
Junior Officer (O01 – O05)	23.6%	76.4%	18.5%	81.5%	23.9%	76.1%	**20.9%**	**79.1%**
	385	1246	884	3895	582	1853	**1851**	**8846**
O00	-	-	12.5%	87.5%	-	-	**12.5%**	**87.5%**
	-	-	58	405	-	-	**58**	**405**
Senior OR (E06 – E10)	21.0%	79.0%	14.3%	85.7%	20.4%	79.6%	**17.4%**	**82.6%**
	228	856	390	2343	294	1144	**912**	**4343**
Junior OR (E01 – E05)	29.8%	70.2%	15.8%	84.2%	26.1%	73.9%	**18.5%**	**81.5%**
	521	1229	2042	10913	562	1594	**3125**	**13736**
E00	-	-	15.8%	84.2%	50.0%	50.0%	**16.4%**	**83.6%**
	-	-	113	601	6	6	**119**	**607**

Note: O00 and E00 refer to trainee ranks. Reserve Officer entry (O00) pathway not offered by Navy and Air Force. Reserve Other Ranks (E00) entry pathway not offered by Navy.

Theme 2: Recruitment and Initial Training

Recruitment is a key element of growing participation as it underpins the composition of the ADF's new recruits and intake. Where targets are not met it can post a challenge for growing not only women's participation, but the overall size of the ADF. Part of this is retaining as many interested individuals across the stages of the recruitment process as possible. Initial training is where a new ADF member's participation commences as they are trained in the skills required of all Sailors, Soldiers, and Aviators before learning the skills required to contribute to their specialisation or mustering.

Achievement of recruitment targets

In 2024-25, recruitment targets were met for five pathways across the Services and for the ADF overall, with some targets being exceeded (e.g. Air Force permanent Other Ranks men, Navy Reserve Officer Men). The proportions of achievement for women's targets are generally much lower with targets being missed by greater margins.

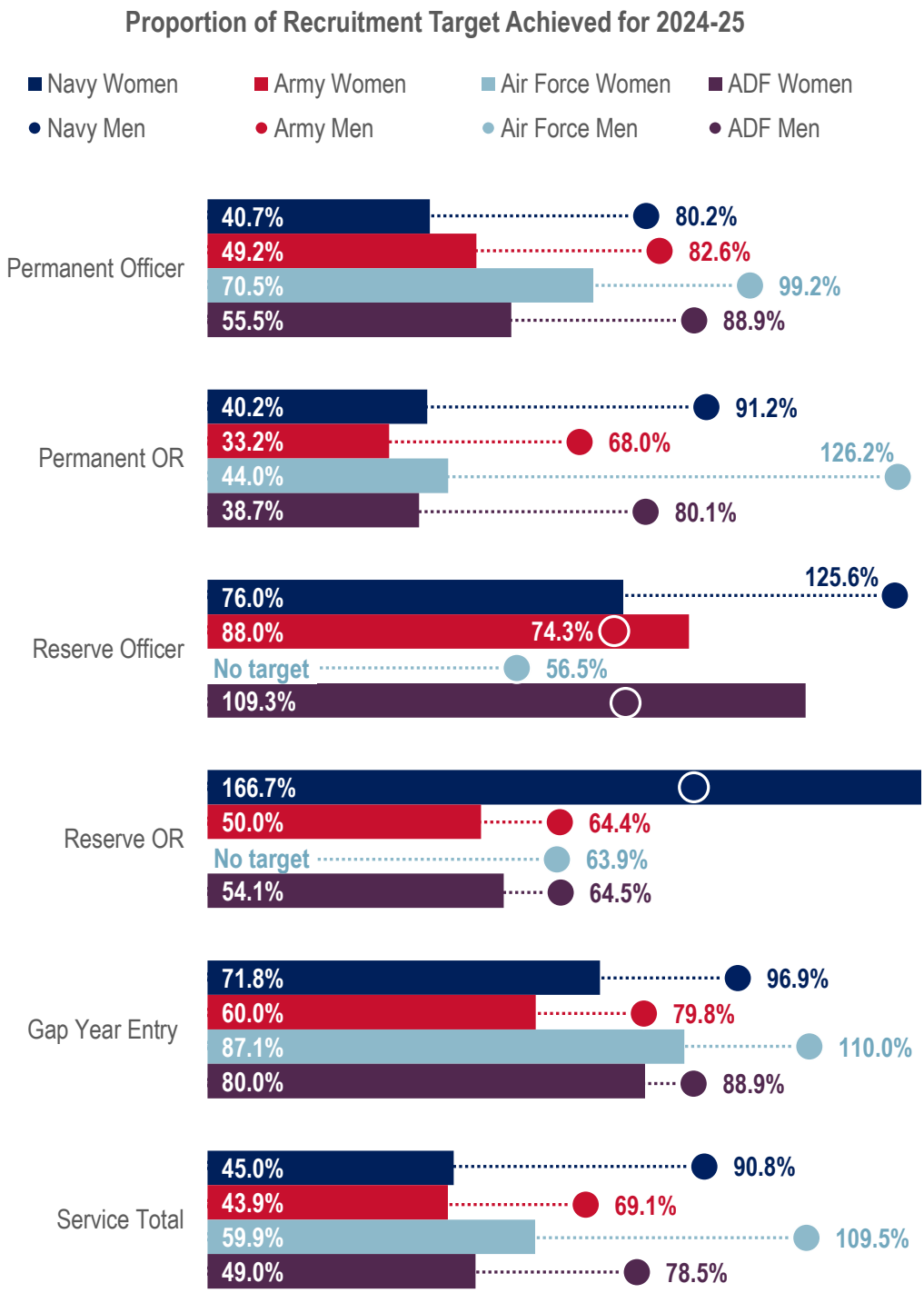


Figure 4 Proportion of Recruitment Target Achieved in 2024-25 by Entry Pathway, Service, and Gender

Table 8 Number of individuals recruited and target by recruitment pathway for 2024-25

Group	Metric	Permanent		Reserve		Gap Year	Service Total
		Officer	Other Ranks	Officer	Other Ranks		
Navy Women	Achieved	61	231	19	5	61	377
	Target	150	575	25	3	85	838
Navy Men	Achieved	154	727	49	8	63	1001
	Target	192	797	39	9	65	1102
Army Women	Achieved	59	229	44	150	65	547
	Target	120	690	50	300	85	1245
Army Men	Achieved	257	1879	200	972	343	3651
	Target	311	2762	269	1509	430	5281
Air Force Women	Achieved	141	242	19	9	122	533
	Target	200	550	0	0	140	890
Air Force Men	Achieved	353	670	39	23	176	1261
	Target	356	531	69	36	160	1152
ADF Women	Achieved	261	702	82	164	248	1457
	Target	470	1815	75	303	310	2973
ADF Men	Achieved	764	3276	288	1003	582	5913
	Target	859	4090	377	1554	655	7535

Retention during the recruitment process

There are six key steps included in the recruitment process: 1) Apply online, 2) Complete a Job Opportunities Assessment, 3) Attend a virtual YOU Session, 4) Attend Assessment and Officer Sessions, 5) Take a fitness test if required, and 6) Attend enlistment or appointment day.[11]

Four key steps are included in the ratios shown in Figure 5. These are the initial Application, YOU Session, Assessment Day, and Enlistment/Appointment.

- Applications are completed online and require the candidate to provide personal details, academic achievements, and up to three job preferences. Candidates then receive access to a Candidate Hub where they complete a Supplementary Application Form related to education, work experience, hobbies, and other relevant experience. ADFA applicants need to apply to the ADF and to the University of New South Wales (UNSW).
- Prior to the YOU Session, applicants will have completed their Job Opportunities Assessment. The Job Opportunities Assessment determines which Service and position(s) a candidate is most likely to be suited to.
- At the YOU Session, candidates have an interview with a Careers Coach to get more information about education, fitness level, sporting history, leadership experience and to receive career advice based on background, eligibility, and interests. Candidates will then have an opportunity to discuss the job roles they may be eligible for based on the Job Opportunity Assessment results.

[11] https://www.adfcareers.gov.au/careers/joining/application-process Accessed 08/09/2025

- Assessment Sessions consist of a medical assessment, psychological interview, and an ADF interview. For more details see ADF Careers - Application Process in Detail.[12]
- The Enlistment or Appointment Day is where the candidate joins the ADF and receives their official ADF job offer.

Figure 5 shows the ratios that were required at each stage to result in a single enlistment or appointment in the 2024-25 reporting period. The greater the number at each stage of the process, the more candidates are required. For example, for one ADF women to have enlisted, there needed to have been 16.6 applications, 10.6 of those women needed to have attended a You Session, and 4 women needed to have completed an Assessment Day. A certain level of attrition is common and reflects broader job seeker behaviours. Candidates may withdraw after receiving additional information, or experiencing change in personal circumstances, or they may be assessed as unsuitable for various reasons.

Currently, achieving one enlistment or appointment of a woman requires higher numbers of candidates at each stage than for men. The attrition of women throughout the recruitment process is much higher than for men (proportionately to a single enlistment) which means that more applicants are required. When combined with lower application rates for women compared to men, which can in part be attributed to a lower propensity to serve, this compounds the challenge of increasing women's proportional representation[13].

There are a few key factors that can affect conversion ratios that should be considered. Higher than average application or assessment volume can increase the ratios at this stage compared to enlistments. Over time this ratio will reduce as these applications become enlistments. There is an inherent time lag in this process as candidates move through the processes, but the ratios only reflect a specific point in time.

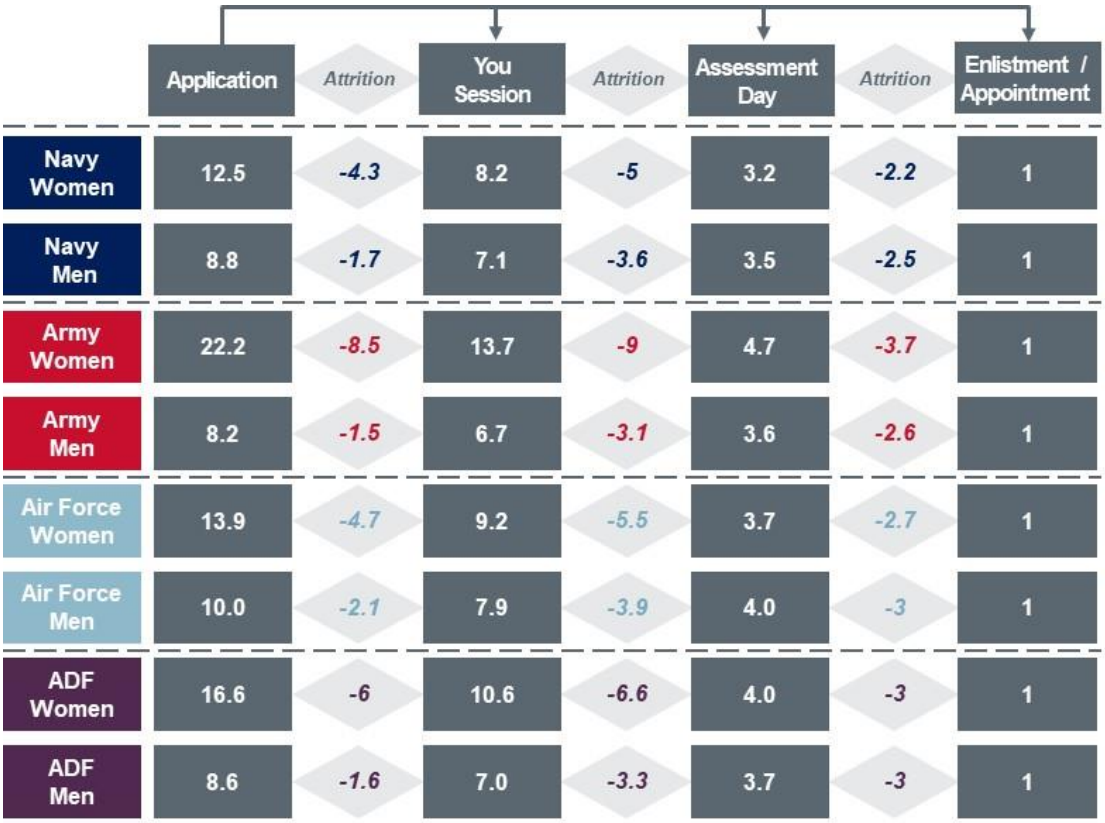


Figure 5 Conversion Ratios Across the Recruitment Process for 2024-25

[12] https://www.adfcareers.gov.au/careers/joining/application-process Accessed 08/09/2025

[13] Department of Defence (2022) Workforce Outlook 2022: Economic and Employment Outlook. Directorate of People Intelligence and Research. Defence. September 05, 2023.

Table 9 Navy Headcounts from Application to Enlistment (2024-25)

Navy Headcounts from Application to Enlistment				
	Application	You Session	Assessment Day	Enlistment or Appointment
Women	4716	3082	1221	377
Conversion Ratio	12.5	8.2	3.2	1
Men	8774	7077	3459	1001
Conversion Ratio	8.8	7.1	3.5	1
Total	13490	10159	4680	1378
Conversion Ratio	9.8	7.4	3.4	1

Table 10 Army Headcounts from Application to Enlistment (2024-25)

Army Headcounts from Application to Enlistment				
	Application	You Session	Assessment Day	Enlistment or Appointment
Women	12120	7517	2579	547
Conversion Ratio	22.2	13.7	4.7	1
Men	29776	24293	13088	3651
Conversion Ratio	8.2	6.7	3.6	1
Total	41896	31810	15667	4198
Conversion Ratio	10	7.6	3.7	1

Table 11 Air Force Headcounts from Application to Enlistment (2024-25)

Air Force Headcounts from Application to Enlistment				
	Application	You Session	Assessment Day	Enlistment or Appointment
Women	7398	4905	1988	533
Conversion Ratio	13.9	9.2	3.7	1
Men	12577	9901	5040	1261
Conversion Ratio	10	7.9	4	1
Total	19975	14806	7028	1794
Conversion Ratio	11.1	8.3	3.9	1

Initial training and ADFA

Men and women graduate from ADFA at similar rates, with Navy and Army men cohorts completing at slightly higher percentages while Air Force had a slightly higher rate for women compared to men. These figures represent the proportion of those who commenced at ADFA and graduated, noting that some graduates may complete in a different Service from the one in which they commenced.

Table 12 Percentages and headcounts for men and women who completed Officer, Other Ranks, or ADFA Initial Military Training in 2024-25

Training Pathway	Service	Women	Men	Difference Between Women and Men
Initial Entry **Officer** Training	Navy	97.00%	95.60%	1.3pp
		96 of 99	284 of 297	
	Army	70.90%	80.50%	-9.6pp
		39 of 55	219 of 272	
	Air Force	97.20%	94.60%	2.5pp
		103 of 106	264 of 279	
	ADF	**91.50%**	**90.40%**	**1.1pp**
		238 of 260	767 of 848	
Initial Entry **Other Ranks** Training	Navy	93.40%	88.00%	5.4pp
		214 of 290	493 of 560	
	Army	85.80%	85.80%	0.0pp
		127 of 148	779 of 908	
	Air Force	98.60%	95.00%	3.6pp
		350 of 355	760 of 800	
	ADF	**94.40%**	**89.60%**	**4.8pp**
		691 of 732	779 of 908	
ADFA	Navy	84.80%	92.50%	-7.7pp
		28 of 33	49 of 53	
	Army	75.70%	75.20%	0.5pp
		28 of 37	79 of 105	
	Air Force	85.70%	90.40%	-4.7pp
		24 of 28	75 of 83	
	ADF	**81.60%**	**84.20%**	**-2.6pp**
		80 of 98	203 of 241	

Note: Differences are subject to rounding and expressed as percentage points (pp) which is the numerical difference between two percentages.

Theme 3: Culture and Workplace Experiences

To grow women's participation it is important that their workplace experiences are positive and the culture of the ADF is supportive. Following previous implementation activities in 2023-24, in 2024-25 Defence has continued efforts to embed the Respect@Work framework within Defence. For example, Defence has revised a range of high-profile training packages to embed Respect@Work in a range of Defence training programs, including mandatory workplace behaviour training and capstone training programs for Senior Executive Service officers.

There continue to be differences in how ADF members experience their workplace based on their gender, as shown in Table 13. These differences vary between Services and where one Service may have a statistically significant difference between men's and women's responses, another may not. For the ADF overall, men indicated more positive perceptions of their career progression, team inclusivity, supervisor leadership, wellbeing in the workplace and morale. However, women had more positive perceptions of senior leadership. Some key findings to note include that Army women indicated more positive perceptions for job engagement whereas for Navy and Air Force, men were more positive. Also, the difference in men's and women's perceptions of team inclusivity were only significantly different for Air Force. Finally, the difference in perceptions of career progression were only significant for Navy, and the difference in perceptions of wellbeing were only significant for Army.

Table 13 Percentage of positive responses for men and women on work and career experience scales in the YourSay Workplace Experience Survey for 2024-25

	Navy		Army		Air Force		ADF	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	**Men**	**Women**
Career Progression Scale	36.8%* (382)	29.1%* (133)	37.30% (794)	37.10% (164)	39.80% (564)	40.30% (220)	**38.0%*** (1740)	**36.4%*** (517)
Job Engagement Scale	64.6%* (1515)	60.1%* (433)	61.5%* (3015)	63.8%* (578)	66.0%* (2255)	64.0%* (817)	**63.7%** (6785)	**63.0%** (1828)
Team Inclusivity Scale	68.8% (383)	68.9% (133)	69.3% (796)	68.5% (163)	71.5%* (564)	67.9%* (220)	**69.9%*** (1743)	**68.4%*** (516)
Senior Leadership Scale	34.8%* (381)	35.1%* (133)	29.0%* (795)	34.3%* (163)	38.1%* (565)	40.7%* (220)	**33.2%*** (1741)	**37.2%*** (516)
Supervisor Leadership Scale	72.6%* (383)	69.3%* (133)	73.0%* (796)	66.5%* (164)	75.6%* (565)	71.6%* (220)	**73.7%*** (1744)	**69.4%*** (517)
Wellbeing in the Workplace Scale	59.4%* (1515)	56.4%* (433)	56.9% (3010)	58.1% (577)	61.3%* (2255)	58.8%* (815)	**58.9%** (6780)	**58.0%** (1825)
Morale Scale	44.6%* (1514)	36.9%* (432)	41.5%* (3008)	36.3%* (578)	45.1%* (2251)	36.7%* (817)	**43.4%*** (6773)	**36.6%*** (1827)

**Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between the overall responses between women and men. Differences are considered statistically significant if, when tested, the p value is less than 0.05. This means that the probability of the difference being random is less than 5%. This helps increase confidence that the comparison is meaningful, even if they may not look it at first glance.*

Results are from the YourSay Workplace Experience Survey for 2024-25[14] and for the Permanent ADF only.

Feeling psychosocially safe at work

Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) refers to the shared perceptions of how well an organisation's policies, practices, and procedures protect the psychological health and safety of its people. There are four main contributing factors to a workplace's PSC: support from senior management, the prioritisation of employee psychological health and safety above productivity, communication regarding psychosocial health and safety, and involvement in psychological health and safety.

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.

PSC can be categorised into different levels of risk to wellbeing. Work environments with a higher safety climate risk score can undermine psychosocial safety and are associated with greater likelihood of unacceptable behaviour, lower job satisfaction and higher 'intention to leave' behaviours. Lower safety climate risk scores indicate that people feel safe and supported when challenges occur.

On the Workplace Behaviours Survey, ADF women reported higher PSC scores than ADF men. The proportion of women in the medium, high and very high PSC categories is statistically significant when compared to men. This indicates that ADF women perceive their psychosocial safety risk to be higher than ADF men.

Table 14 Psychosocial Safety Climate Scale Risk Categories for ADF and by Service 2024-25

	Navy		Army		Air Force		ADF Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	**Men**	**Women**
Low risk	78.2%*	68.0%*	75.3%*	63.1%*	77.2%*	66.2%*	**76.6%***	**65.6%***
	990	281	1734	344	1417	425	4141	1050
Medium risk	4.7%*	8.5%*	4.5%	5.7%	6.0%	6.1%	**5.1%***	**6.6%***
	60	35	104	31	110	39	274	105
High risk	11.3%	14.5%	13.0%*	17.1%*	11.1%*	15.9%*	**12.0%***	**15.9%***
	143	60	299	93	204	102	646	255
Very high risk	5.8%*	9.0%*	7.2%*	14.1%*	5.7%*	11.8%*	**6.3%***	**11.9%***
	73	37	165	77	642	76	343	190
Total	*1266*	*413*	*2302*	*545*	*1836*	*642*	*5404*	*1600*

**Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between the overall responses between women and men. Differences are considered statistically significant if, when tested, the p value is less than 0.05. This means that the probability of the difference being random is less than 5%. This helps increase confidence that the comparison is meaningful, even if they may not look it at first glance.*

Recognising the vital link between psychosocial risk mitigation and overall mental health and wellbeing, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Branch has established a dedicated Psychosocial Wellbeing Directorate. This Directorate plays a central role in supporting Defence to proactively identify, assess and address aspects of the work environment that may contribute to psychosocial harm. Importantly, this approach shifts Defence beyond compliance and due-diligence obligations

[14] https://www.defence.gov.au/about/accessing-information/workplace-experience-surveys

toward a broader, proactive psychosocial safety focus. To support leaders in fulfilling this responsibility, the Directorate is advancing several priority initiatives. These include partnering with Phoenix Australia to develop training and resources that underpin an enterprise-wide approach to addressing vicarious and secondary trauma. Additionally, a Psychosocial Risk Management Leader's Guide is being developed to equip leaders with practical, evidence-based strategies to recognise and respond to psychosocial hazards and promote safe, supportive and psychologically healthy workplaces.

Unacceptable behaviour

Defence recognises the term 'sexual misconduct' does not encompass the harm caused to victim-survivors or the scope of offences and is adopting 'sexual violence' in all policies, training packages and communication by the end of 2026. Sexual misconduct is used here to reflect terminology used in the Workplace Behaviours Survey at the time of data collection for 2024-25.[15]

'Any unacceptable behaviour' reflects the percentage of respondents who have experienced a form of unacceptable behaviour in the past 12 months. In the 2024-25 Workplace Behaviours Survey, women reported experiencing unacceptable behaviour more than men. This difference was statistically significantly different for all of the types of unacceptable behaviour included in the Workplace Behaviours Survey.

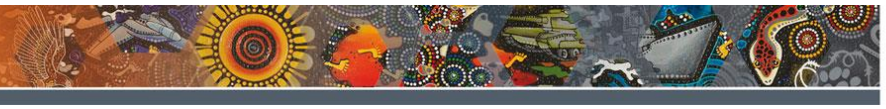
Table 15 Unacceptable Behaviour by Service and Gender - 2024-25

	Navy		Army		Air Force		ADF total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	**Men**	**Women**
Total number of respondents	1536	508	2832	668	2187	807	**6555**	**1983**
Any UB	37.6%*	52.8%*	30.7%*	49.3%*	30.8%*	49.3%*	**32.4%***	**50.2%***
	577	268	870	329	674	398	**2121**	**995**
Bullying	13.2%*	26.4%*	11.8%*	23.8%*	12.2%*	24.5%*	**12.3%***	**24.8%***
	202	134	335	159	266	198	**803**	**491**
Harassment	23.4%*	38.2%*	18.4%*	33.7%*	20.1%*	34.9%*	**20.2%***	**35.4%***
	359	194	522	225	440	282	**1321**	**701**
Sexual harassment	0.8%*	5.7%*	0.7%*	3.6%*	0.5%*	3.6%*	**0.6%***	**4.1%***
	12	29	19	24	10	29	**41**	**82**
Discrimination	4.0%*	8.3%*	4.1%*	8.2%*	4.1%*	8.3%*	**4.1%***	**8.3%***
	62	42	115	55	89	67	**266**	**164**
Sexual assault or attempted assault	0.1%*	1.2%*	0.0%*	0.3%*	0.0%*	0.5%*	**<0.1%***	**0.6%***
	1	6	0	2	0	4	**1**	**12**
Sexual misconduct	2.8%*	12.4%*	2.4%*	8.8%*	2.2%*	8.2%*	**2.4%***	**9.5%***
	43	63	68	59	49	66	**160**	**188**
Abuse of power	7.0%*	11.2%*	6.8%*	11.4%*	6.5%*	11.2%*	**6.7%***	**11.2%***
	108	57	192	76	142	90	**442**	**223**
Violent behaviour	3.2%*	5.1%*	2.4%*	6.3%*	2.3%*	5.7%*	**2.6%***	**5.7%***
	49	26	69	42	50	46	**168**	**114**

*Note: All gender differences are statistically significant as denoted by an *asterisk.*

Not all experiences of unacceptable behaviour are formally reported (e.g. with a complaint). There are various reasons for this. For example, policy supports addressing issues at the lowest possible level

[15] The Workplace Behaviours Survey defines sexual misconduct as sexual related unacceptable behaviours that were carried out with the intention of offending, humiliating, or intimidating an individual. Prevalence is calculated based on participant's experiences of 12 different sexualised behaviours, which may include sexual harassment, sexual offences, or sexual assault.



where practical and appropriate. In addition, there are factors that operate as a disincentive to reporting unacceptable behaviour (e.g. fear of stigma). There is ongoing Defence work to prevent sexual violence including implementation of the Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide a recent CDF stand down, implementation of Respect@Work Action Plans, SafeSide suicide awareness training and introduction of a new Defence First Nations Commitment.

While the goal is to prevent unacceptable behaviour, work also continues to ensure a positive reporting culture and to ensure that, Defence members feel supported to take action after an experience in whatever way they feel comfortable. Defence continues to take a trauma informed, person centred approach that is guided by the person's needs and wishes.

Theme 4: Opportunities – Career, training and development

Growing the participation of women is not only about increasing the headcount of women in the ADF, but also about supporting the participation of current ADF women. Education schemes such as DASS and the Defence College support women's participation as they allow members to grow their personal skillset and further contribute to Defence capability.

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. There was a budgeted commitment of over $24.3 million for 2024- 25. In 2024-25, women participated in DASS at a significantly higher rate than the respective service participation rates. Conversely, men use DASS at a lower rate to the respective service participation rates. ADFA PG participation is more aligned with service participation rates.

The higher participation rates of women in Education Schemes is consistent with wider societal trends in education, as detailed in the Department of Education's Key Findings from the 2024 Higher Education Student Statistics (2025).[16]

Table 16 Participation in Education Schemes in academic year 2024

		DASS		ADFA PG	
Navy	Women	38.2%	395	23.6%	59
	Men	61.8%	634	76.4%	191
	Total number	**1033**		**250**	
Army	Women	29.9%	360	12.9%	66
	Men	70.1%	845	87.1%	446
	Total number	**1,205**		**513**	
Air Force	Women	45.4%	496	30.2%	117
	Men	54.6%	595	69.9%	269
	Total number	**1092**		**388**	
ADF	Women	37.6%	1251	21.0%	242
	Men	62.4%	2074	79.0%	906
	Total number	**3,330**		**1151**	

[16] Department of Education (Australian Government). (2025, September). Key findings from the 2024 Higher Education Student Statistics. Australian Government Department of Education. https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/student-data/selected-higher-education-statistics-2024-student-data/key-findings-2024-higher-education-student-statistics

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.

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.[17]

In 2024-25, every Navy and Air Force promotion board had at least one woman board member present. Army promotion boards did not consistently meet this criterion. The Army places a strong emphasis on ensuring diversity within promotion board membership and appoints women as participants in every promotion board. Senior promotion boards further enhance this diversity by including women from Other Government Agencies and Industry partners to further enrich the perspectives represented. When unforeseen circumstances require short notice adjustments to board composition, women's perspectives continue to shape the process; through participation as board observers, by advising delegates, or by serving as the delegates who make final decisions on promotion outcomes.

Table 17 Number and percentage of promotion boards with at least one woman board member (2024-25)

Mode of Service	Rank Group	Navy	Army	Air Force
Permanent Force	Officers	100% (24 of 24)	92% (12 of 13)	100% (92 of 92)
	Other ranks	100% (56 of 56)	72% (82 of 114)	100% (134 of 134)
Reserve Force	Officers	Navy runs integrated Permanent and Reserve boards.	33% (1 of 3)	100% (47 of 47)
	Other ranks		52% (79 of 153)	100% (87 of 87)

Note: These numbers indicate the boards with at least one woman board member, but multiple women may have been present. For Army Other Ranks, the same promotion boards consider Permanent and Reserve promotions.

Senior decision-making committees

Many of the Senior Committees have acting or representative personnel attending so the composition of the group in the room may vary. The figures in the table below reflect the substantive incumbents of the committee positions. Membership of a committee is typically tied to a specific role within the organisation and as such the low participation of ADF women (and APS women) is tied to representation within senior ranks and roles. Committees may also not have a large number of ADF positions on them for ADF women to hold which can further reduce opportunities for ADF women to participate.

[17] Senior rank positions are defined as Lieutenant Colonel or equivalent and above, and Warrant Officer Class 2 or equivalent and above.

Table 18 Percentage of women on Defence Senior Committees 2024-25

Tier	Name of Committee	Members	ADF Women	ADF Men	APS Women	APS Men
1	Defence Committee (DC)	9	11% *1 woman*	22% *2 men*	11% *1 woman*	56% *5 men*
1	Defence Audit & Risk Committee (DARC)	12	0%	8% *1 man*	33% *4 women*	58% *7 men*
2	Chiefs of Service Committee (COSC)	16	13% *2 women*	56% *9 men*	6% *1 woman*	25% *4 men*
2	Enterprise Business Committee (EBC)	22	9% *2 women*	27% *6 men*	23% *5 women*	41% *9 men*
2	Investment Committee (IC)	26	8% *2 women*	27% *7 men*	35% *9 women*	31% *8 men*
2	Defence Strategic Policy Committee	17	6% *1 women*	29% *5 men*	29% *5 women*	35% *6 men*
3	Defence People Committee	23	13% *3 women*	35% *8 men*	39% *9 women*	13% *3 men*
3	Defence Finance and Resourcing Committee	23	4% *1 woman*	30% *7 men*	26% *6 women*	39% *9 men*
3	Defence Communication & IS Capability Committee	20	5% *1 woman*	30% *6 men*	35% *7 women*	30% *6 men*
3	Defence Security Committee	30	0%	27% *8 men*	30% *9 women*	43% *13 men*
3	Defence Joint Warfare Committee	27	7% *2 women*	70% *19 men*	15% *4 women*	7% *2 men*
3	Intelligence Enterprise Committee	11	0%	36% *4 men*	36% *4 women*	27% *3 men*
Totals		**236**	**6%** *15 women*	**35%** *82 men*	**27%** *64 women*	**32%** *75 men*

Honours and Awards

An equitable Honours and Awards system would reflect the participation rates of each Service, ensuring recognition is proportionate and fair. In 2024-25 women were well-represented in the presentation of honours and awards, with higher than Service-proportion awards in places.

Defence commendations exist to provide formal recognition for outstanding achievements where other Honours are not appropriate, with individuals typically nominated through their chain of command. In February 2025, Command Commendations were added as a new type of Defence Commendation (existing commendations were Bronze, Silver, and Gold).

Table 19 Honours and Awards presented in 2024-25 to women

	Navy		Army		Air Force		ADF	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	**Women**	**Men**
Conspicuous Service Cross and Medal	30.0%	70%	23.50%	76.50%	16.70%	83.30%	**23.40%**	**76.60%**
	9	21	12	39	5	25	**26**	**85**
Order of Australia Officer, Member, and Medals	21.1%	78.9%	14.30%	85.70%	35.70%	64.30%	**21.30%**	**78.70%**
	4	15	4	24	5	9	**13**	**48**
Australia Day Medallions	21.2%	78.8%	20.50%	79.50%	30.90%	69.10%	**24.70%**	**75.30%**
	11	41	8	31	17	38	**36**	**110**
Defence Commendations	28.6%	71.4%	21.00%	79.00%	32.60%	67.40%	**26.30%**	**73.70%**
	130	324	147	553	135	279	**412**	**1156**

Operational Deployments

In 2024-25, women were represented on deployments at proportions similar to their Service participation rates. Note that year on year comparisons are challenging as operations and roles vary which may impact opportunities (for example, if more Health personnel are needed or Combat & Security).

Table 20 Deployments by Service with total headcounts of personnel deployed

	Navy		Army		Air Force		ADF	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	**Women**	**Men**
Permanent	20.9%	79.1%	12.6%	87.4%	23.9%	76.1%	**19.2%**	**80.8%**
	656	2484	254	1766	420	1336	**1330**	**5586**
Reserve	13.8%	86.2%	13.6%	86.4%	33.3%	66.7%	**14.3%**	**85.7%**
	4	25	51	325	5	10	**60**	**360**

Australian Defence College

In 2024-25, women were represented on the Australian Command and Staff Course at a percentage greater than their Service participation for Army, Air Force, and the ADF but at a lower rate for Navy. International Staff Colleges are not included in this section but ADF members are also able to attend Staff College overseas. This proportionally greater representation of women can help correct for historical underrepresentation and reduce barriers for women moving into senior ranks and leadership roles where ADC qualifications are generally advantageous for promotion suitability.

Women were underrepresented on the remote offering of the Australian Command and Staff Course. However, the total headcounts for members completing the remote course are quite low and do vary year-on-year. A very small percentage of the Navy remote participants were women and none of the four Army remote participants were women. In contrast, just over a third of Air Force's remote participants were women. For low headcount cohorts, individual preference could be driving this difference more than gendered drivers or structural factors.

For the Defence and Strategic Studies Course, there is a low headcount for participation and women have typically been represented at a percentage greater than their Service participation on courses. Services plan course participation carefully to ensure opportunities align with career stages, individual suitability, and selection criteria.

Table 21 Australian Command and Staff Course Participation in 2024-25

	Navy		Army		Air Force		ADF	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	**Women**	**Men**
Permanent	17.3%	82.7%	16.4%	83.6%	35.4%	64.6%	**22.4%**	**77.6%**
	9	43	10	51	17	31	**36**	**125**
Reserve	0.0%	100.0%	9.1%	90.9%	50.0%	50.0%	**11.1%**	**88.9%**
	0	1	3	30	1	1	**4**	**32**

Promotions

Efforts have been made to make promotion systems more equitable, including a 2021 agreement by COSC that promotion boards include at least one woman. Considering the 2024-25 period, ADF men and women were overall found eligible and suitable for promotion in similar proportions, however there are Service differences. When interpreting these figures it is important to remember there must be a role for a member to promote into and that can affect who promotes and when, particularly at higher ranks and in smaller segments where there may be more limited opportunities.

In 2024-25, the proportions of eligible found suitable for promotion and suitable candidates promoted were similar for Navy men and women with only slightly smaller percentages for women A larger percentage of eligible Army men were found suitable for promotion compared to women, but this gap decreased for promotions of suitable candidates with men's percentage remaining slightly higher than women's. In contrast, the percentage of eligible Air Force women found suitable was slightly higher than for men and this gap shrank slightly for percentages of suitable candidates who were promoted.

Table 22 Percentage of eligible population found suitable for promotion and of those suitable that were promoted in 2024-25

	Navy		Army		Air Force		ADF	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	**Women**	**Men**
Percentage of eligible personnel found suitable	87.7% (1097 of 1251)	88.7% (3527 of 3976)	73.7% (143 of 194)	89.5% (607 of 678)	48.0% (589 of 1227)	42.2% (1558 of 3692)	**68.5% (1829 of 2672)**	**68.2% (5692 of 8346)**
Percentage of suitable candidates promoted	29.8% (327 of 1097)	31.0% (1095 of 3527)	84.6% (121 of 143)	87.0% (528 of 607)	59.3% (349 of 589)	56.0% (872 of 1558)	**43.6% (797 of 1829)**	**43.8% (2495 of 5692)**

Note: The percentage of eligible personnel found suitable is produced by dividing the number of personnel who were found suitable by the number that were eligible. The percentage of suitable candidates who were promoted is produced by dividing the number of promoted personnel by the number who had been found suitable for promotion not those initially eligible. This then shows the differences at each stage and is why the latter percentage may be larger.

Theme 5: Flexible work and service

Flexible work and service arrangements support ADF members to contribute to capability in ways that work for them and their lives. Under the Total Workforce System, flexible service arrangements (FSA) are those that allow the permanent workforce (SERCAT 6, 7, and SERVOP C) 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. These options can help retain members and allow them to participate more fully alongside their other commitments.

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), and
- Service Category (SERCAT) 6.

Women consistently use formalised flexible arrangements at a rate roughly two times higher than men. The formalised flexible work arrangement most commonly utilised by Navy and Army men was Alternate Location Work, while Air Force men most frequently used Variable Work Hours. For Navy and Air Force women, Variable Work Hours was the most utilised arrangement, whereas Army women most often used Alternate Location Work.

Table 23 Formalised Flexible Work Uptake in 2024-25

	Women	Men
Navy	8.9% (271 women)	4.9% (453 men)
Army	5.7% (213 women)	2.3% (460 men)
Air Force	12.9% (498 women)	7.1% (722 men)
ADF	**9.2% (928 women)**	**4.1% (1635 men)**

Table 24 Percentage of Members on Flexible Work Arrangements who are using each type of FWA or FSA by Gender and by Service for 2024-25

	Navy		Army		Air Force		ADF	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	**Women**	**Men**
Variable Work Hours	54.2%	46.8%	41.3%	35.7%	71.7%	61.6%	**60.3%**	**50.2%**
	147	212	88	164	357	445	**592**	**821**
Home Located Work	41.0%	33.3%	39.0%	40.2%	38.4%	29.8%	**39.2%**	**33.7%**
	111	151	83	185	191	215	**385**	**551**
Alternate Location Work	52.8%	57.7%	57.7%	60.0%	35.3%	41.6%	**45.0%**	**51.1%**
	143	260	123	276	176	300	**442**	**836**
Remote Overseas Work	2.6%	1.5%	6.6%	3.3%	4.0%	1.9%	**4.2%**	**2.2%**
	7	7	14	15	20	14	**41**	**36**
SERCAT6	4.4%	0.4%	9.4%	4.2%	16.3%	2.2%	**11.5%**	**1.7%**
	12	2	20	9	81	16	**113**	**27**

Note: The percentages are for the gender group within each Service that are using flexible work arrangements, for example of the 8.9% of Navy Women using flexible arrangements, 54.2% are using variable work hours.

Perceptions of accessing and of the benefits of flexible work and service arrangements

Certain roles and Defence environments face challenges in accommodating specific types of flexible arrangements due to operational requirements. Flexible work and service options are expected to be supported where feasible. Uptake of these arrangements appears to be influenced by factors such as perceptions of unit support, concerns about career progression, the nature of the individual's role, posting location and other social or structural considerations. Addressing these factors is important, as access to FWA and FSA is associated with intentions to continue to serve.

Table 25 Total Percentages for Strongly Agree and Agree Responses for YourSay Workplace Experience Survey Items on the Benefits of Flexible Work and Service Arrangements 2024-25

YourSay Workplace Experience Survey Items		Navy	Army	Air Force
Having members serving from different SERCATs promotes diversity and inclusiveness in the Workforce.	Women	73.4%* (271)	74.7%* (384)	77.0%* (560)
	Men	60.7%* (1031)	56.9%* (2060)	58.8%* (1605)
Reserve ADF members make a valuable contribution to my work group.	Women	68.9%* (238)	72.6%* (358)	80.0%* (520)
	Men	67.7%* (963)	61.9%* (1940)	73.6%* (1526)
Flexible Service Arrangements provide improved career opportunities.	Women	48.5%* (264)	48.7%* (357)	45.7%* (530)
	Men	40.2%* (1007)	35.3%* (1921)	37.7%* (1487)
Flexible Service Arrangements offer opportunities to develop more diverse skills.	Women	63.4%* (265)	59.6%* (364)	62.8%* (530)
	Men	50.3%* (996)	47.4%* (1923)	50.6%* (1501)

***Note**: Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between the overall responses between women and men, i.e. across the high/very high, moderate, and low/very low levels.*

Table 26 Total Percentages for Strongly Agree and Agree Responses for YourSay Workplace Experience Survey Items about Accessing Flexible Work and Service Arrangements 2024-25

YourSay Workplace Experience Survey Items		Navy	Army	Air Force
If I accessed Flexible Work Arrangements my career progression would be negatively impacted.	Women	28.6% (276)	34.2% (366)	22.8%* (544)
	Men	29.3% (1000)	37.0% (1918)	26.7%* (1493)
If I accessed Flexible Service Arrangements my career progression would be negatively impacted.	Women	36.2% (265)	37.1% (356)	31.2%* (535)
	Men	35.1% (992)	39.1% (1921)	31.8%* (1483)
My unit would be supportive of me undertaking flexible service.	Women	48.7%* (273)	49.3%* (377)	50.5% (556)
	Men	43.5%* (1038)	42.6%* (2044)	48.7% (1556)
Flexible Service Arrangements positively influenced my decision to stay in the [Service]	Women	49.1%* (212)	43.7%* (284)	52.0%* (425)
	Men	31.8%* (767)	31.5%* (1512)	36.3%* (1164)
The ability to serve under different SERCATs helps me achieve a better work-life balance.	Women	58.5%* (176)	54.1%* (268)	58.0%* (362)
	Men	40.7%* (668)	39.4%* (1430)	44.1%* (1021)
The availability to work on less than a full-time basis positively influenced my decision to stay in the [Service].	Women	39.2%* (181)	38.2%* (262)	49.5%* (372)
	Men	27.9%* (634)	29.6%* (1394)	32.0%* (1022)
I now have a good understanding of what options are available to me under the Total Workforce System.	Women	56.0% (282)	59.2%* (390)	64.0%* (566)
	Men	53.9% (1077)	50.3%* (2075)	51.0%* (1596)

***Note**: Asterisk indicates a statistically significant difference between the overall responses between women and men, i.e. across the high/very high, moderate, and low/very low levels.*

Theme 6: Retention and Transition

Retention can be an outcome of the initiatives that grow participation. Through supportive and flexible workplaces, opportunities to grow and develop, and feeling safe at work members may choose to continue serving for longer. Growing the length of a members' participation is part of the 2024 Defence Workforce Plan. One line of effort involves Defence working to increase the average length of service for permanent ADF members from 7 years to around 12 years.

Separation rates

ADF men separate at a higher rate than women for the Permanent Force but similar for Reserves. Air Force and Navy have similar separation rates for men and women, but Army has a slightly higher separation rate for men than for women. For more data on separation rates and headcounts, see Chapter 5 of the Defence Annual Report 2024-25 Table 5.2 and Table 5.12.

Table 27 Separation Rates by Service and Gender for 2024-25

		Permanent	Reserve
Navy	Women	7.1%	12.3%
	Men	6.8%	13.6%
Army	Women	7.8%	8.4%
	Men	9.7%	9.3%
Air Force	Women	6.2%	15.0%
	Men	6.2%	14.2%
ADF	**Women**	**7.0%**	**11.4%**
	Men	**8.1%**	**11.5%**

Length of service

ADF men have a greater average length of service than women and this holds true for all three Services. Officers overall have a longer length of Service than Other Ranks but the gender gap remains similar for both rank cohorts.

Table 28 Average Length of Service for Officer and Other Ranks men and women by Service (2024-25)

		Officers		Other Ranks	
		Permanent	Reserve	Permanent	Reserve
Navy	Women	11.8	19.3	7.9	16.4
	Men	13.9	19.4	10.2	19.4
Army	Women	12.6	12.1	8.2	12.1
	Men	14.1	13.2	9.3	13.2
Air Force	Women	10.9	17.2	7.9	17.2
	Men	13.7	21.7	11.8	21.7
ADF	**Women**	**11.7**	**13.9**	**8.0**	**13.9**
	Men	**13.9**	**15.1**	**10.1**	**15.1**

Retention after maternity and/or parental leave

The percentage of women and men retained after a period of maternity and/or parental leave is similar at the 1.5 year and 3 year stages but a difference emerges at 5 years. However, based on this data, it is hard to identify if the decrease in women retained is directly related to maternity leave or is related to overall shorter length of service for women or an interaction of these factors.

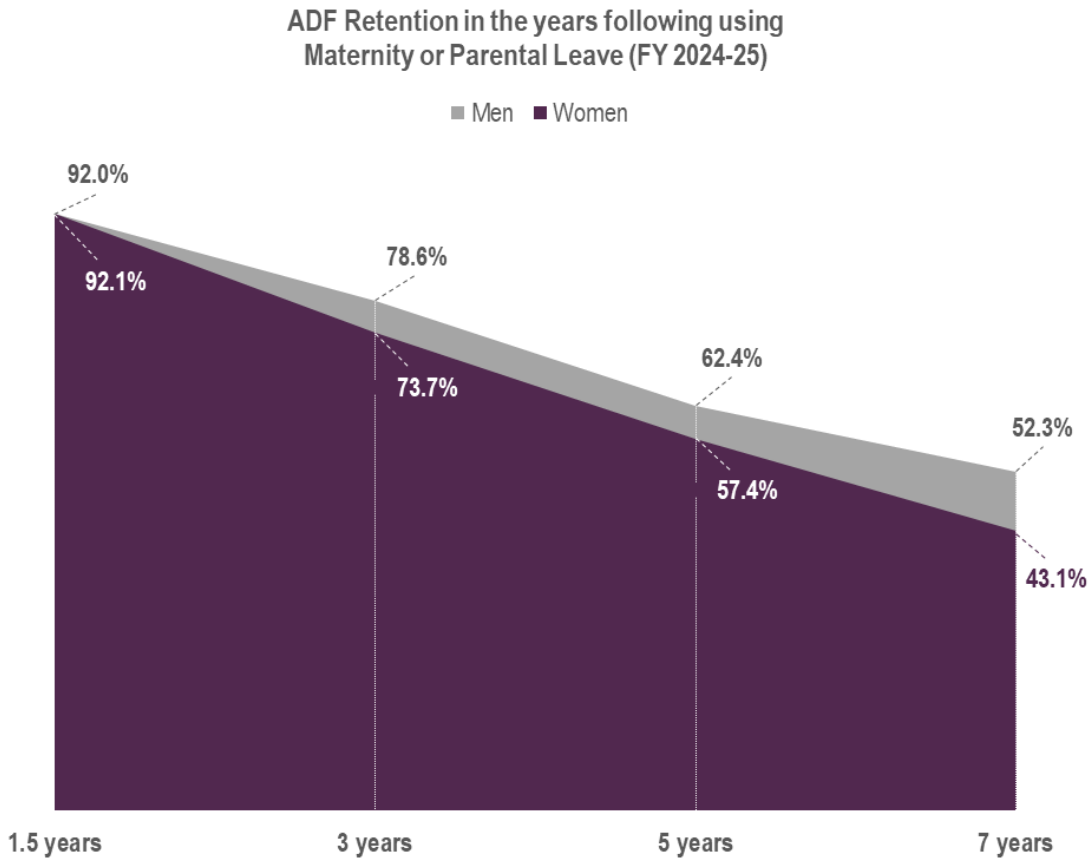


Figure 6 ADF Retention at 1.5, 3, 5, and 7 years following Maternity or Parental Leave FY 2024-25

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.

There are challenges for parents in balancing the needs of their families and caring responsibilities with the requirements of service. Persistent gendered norms around childcare often result in women taking on a disproportionate amount of caring responsibilities. This disproportionately impacts women's participation in paid work with many women taking time away from paid work to care for young children. This is a trend that is reflected in broader women's workplace participation rates. Reducing gender specific provisions in parental leave and understanding the barriers to uptake of flexible work arrangements (FWA) and flexible service arrangements (FSA) by all members is likely to have a positive impact on balancing caring responsibilities. Further detail on this approach is provided in the 2021–22 and 2022–23 Women in the ADF Reports.

Table 29 ADF Retention at 1.5, 3, 5, and 7 years following Maternity or Parental Leave

Cohort	Timeframe	Women	Men
Overall	**1.5 years**	**92.1%**	**92.0%**
		788 of 856	**2170 of 2359**
	3 years	**73.7%**	**78.6%**
		674 of 915	**2083 of 2649**
	5 years	**57.4%**	**62.4%**
		440 of 767	**1170 of 2835**
	7 years	**43.1%**	**52.3%**
		295 of 684	**1323 of 2531**
Officers	**1.5 years**	94.6%	95.4%
		194 of 205	**619 of 649**
	3 years	82.5%	86.4%
		198 of 240	**658 of 762**
	5 years	68.1%	76.3%
		145 of 213	**605 of 793**
	7 years	49.7%	68.8%
		93 of 187	**416 of 605**
Other Ranks	**1.5 years**	91.2%	90.7%
		594 of 651	**1551 of 1710**
	3 years	70.5%	75.5%
		476 of 675	**1425 of 1887**
	5 years	53.2%	57.1%
		295 of 554	**1165 of 2042**
	7 years	40.6%	47.1%
		202 of 497	**907 of 1926**

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.

Relationships Categorisations of those in Defence-Recognised Relationships

There are many reasons why service personnel may not be accompanied by resident family. Being unaccompanied and nights away from home have an impact on the member and their family. It can present difficulties for childcare arrangements, put extra strain on those remaining at home, and be challenging for the unaccompanied member.

Table 30 Percentages of members who were categorised as having an Unaccompanied or Accompanied Resident Family in 2024-25

		Unaccompanied Resident Family			Accompanied Resident Family		
		Officers	Other Ranks	**Overall**	Officers	Other Ranks	**Overall**
Navy	Women	6.2%	3.4%	**4.3%**	43.5%	40.3%	**41.3%**
		71 of 1141	86 of 2534	**157 of 3675**	496 of 1141	1020 of 2534	**1516 of 3675**
	Men	10.9%	6.1%	**7.5%**	40.3%	43.3%	**46.0%**
		367 of 3366	495 of 8088	**862 of 11454**	1769 of 3366	3503 of 8088	**5272 of 11454**
Army	Women	5.3%	3.9%	**4.3%**	57.9%	50.6%	**52.7%**
		66 of 1253	116 of 2988	**182 of 4241**	725 of 1253	1511 of 2988	**2236 of 4241**
	Men	7.7%	5.8%	**6.2%**	50.6%	47.2%	**50.7%**
		418 of 5437	1042 of 18019	**1460 of 23456**	3383 of 5437	8513 of 18019	**11896 of 23456**
Air Force	Women	6.0%	4.3%	**4.9%**	53.0%	51.4%	**52.0%**
		98 of 1637	117 of 2750	**215 of 4387**	868 of 1637	1414 of 2750	**2282 of 4387**
	Men	7.7%	5.5%	**6.4%**	59.7%	55.8%	**57.3%**
		351 of 4558	392 of 7136	**743 of 11694**	2720 of 4558	3980 of 7136	**6700 of 11694**
ADF	Women	**5.8%**	**3.9%**	**4.5%**	**51.8%**	**47.7%**	**49.0%**
		235 of 4031	**319 of 8272**	**554 of 12303**	**2089 of 4031**	**3945 of 8272**	**6034 of 12303**
	Men	**8.5%**	**5.8%**	**6.6%**	**58.9%**	**48.1%**	**51.2%**
		1136 of 13361	**1929 of 33243**	**3065 of 46604**	**7872 of 13361**	**15996 of 33243**	**6034 of 12303**

Transitioning out of the Permanent Force

Members transition out of the Permanent Force for many reasons and the reason for transition can impact the transition process and outcomes for the person transitioning. After a member has submitted their application to transfer from the Permanent Force, they will be prompted to complete a Transition Preparedness Questionnaire (TPQ). The TPQ was designed to provide crucial insights into a member's wellbeing through understanding their circumstances and preparedness prior to their transition. This is done through elements of the Human Security Framework and includes Education, Finance, Health, Housing, Meaningful Engagement, Social, and Transport. This snapshot allows Transition Coaches to identify key areas where a member may benefit from additional support and encourages the member to reflect on actions they may need to take.

'Circumstance' relates to a member's status or welfare at a given point in time. 'Preparedness' relates to where the member sits as they start to think about their civilian life. Members additionally completed the TPQ2 two weeks after their Clearance Session. The TPQ2 is identical to the TPQ1, acting as both

a comparison point and a final check of the member's preparedness and circumstance to guide any further support. Table 24 shows consistent differences between men's and women's scores for education and social connectivity, with women exhibiting higher scores in these areas for both circumstance and preparedness.

Table 31 Average Scores for ADF Men and Women on the Factors of Human Security Framework on the Transition Preparedness Questionnaire 1 and 2 (FY 2024-25)

		TP 1		TP 2	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
	Number of responses	**1154**	**280**	**192**	**29**
The ADF Human Security Framework (HSF) provides a conceptual structure of wellbeing that can be used to guide programs, processes and other activities within Defence.	**Overall Circumstance**	**71.5%**	**72.3%**	**76.0%**	**77.4%**
	Overall Preparedness	**73.3%**	**72.5%**	**80.0%**	**80.5%**
Education - Access to relevant education and training to enable employment or engagement goals for the member and their family.	Circumstance	47.4%^	53.9%^	53.6%^	60.9%^
	Preparedness	53.9%^	60.0%^	59.3%^	65.8%^
Financial security through access to income or savings, and the fiscal literacy to have confidence in meeting financial commitments	Circumstance	73.6%	72.7%	79.4%	77.7%
	Preparedness	67.7%	66.3%	78.5%^	76.3%^
Health - A state of mental and physical wellbeing, supported by affordable, ongoing access to appropriate health care for the member and their family.	Circumstance	77.2%^	79.3%^	83.3%^	87.8%^
	Preparedness	80.4%	80.4%	94.5%	93.8%
Housing - Ongoing access to affordable, appropriate accommodation that aligns with the member's and their family's needs.	Circumstance	82.4%	82.9%	83.3%^	86.4%^
	Preparedness	94.0%	93.9%	99.4%	98.4%
Employment and Meaningful Engagement - Personal fulfilment from paid employment or unpaid involvement in the community, volunteering, a hobby, or in the household, contingent on individual values	Circumstance	58.6%^	56.3%^	64.7%	63.0%
	Preparedness	56.7%^	53.8%^	62.0%	61.4%
Social connectivity through family, friends, command and the unit. Offers comprehensive, reliable support to the member	Circumstance	85.4%^	87.9%^	86.1%^	88.3%^
	Preparedness	75.2%^	77.4%^	75.7%^	81.0%^
Transport - Ongoing access to an affordable mode of transport to facilitate participation in employment, the community, and access to essential services.	Circumstance	80.6%	81.3%	81.2%^	84.6%^
	Preparedness	92.1%^	89.5%^	91.6%^	96.6%^

Note ^ Symbol reflects a greater than 2 percentage point difference between men and women.

Conclusion

The Women in the ADF Report for 2024–25 provides a comprehensive assessment of progress against key performance indicators (KPIs) across six strategic themes: Workforce participation; Recruitment and initial training; Culture and workplace experience; Career, training, and development opportunities; Flexible work and service; and Retention and transition.

The reporting period reflects the ADF's ongoing commitment to gender equity. Results indicate progress in a number of areas (albeit some of these are incremental) but, ongoing challenges in others, as well as several areas requiring further attention.

Women's participation in the Permanent Force (SERCAT 6 and 7) across the ADF and individual Services remained broadly stable compared to the previous financial year. Navy and Air Force recorded modest increases. Short-term retention following parental leave is strong; however, gender gaps widen over time post-leave, particularly at the five- and seven-year marks. Men continue to serve longer than women across most categories. Participation in Reserve Forces (SERCAT 3 to 5) improved slightly for Navy and Air Force (increases of 0.4 percentage points for both Services), while Army remained stable (a decrease 0.1 percentage point). Representation of women in senior officer ranks aligns broadly with overall participation for the ADF and Army. However, women remain underrepresented at Senior Other Ranks compared to their Service participation rates. Recruitment targets were not met across many entry pathways, with higher proportional success for men's targets than women's. There are higher attrition rates for women early in the recruitment process.

Women are represented near or above 25% in four of the eight workforce segments: Logistics (31.3%), Intelligence (31.2%), Enterprise & Command Support (47.4%), and Health (54.6%), Participation in segments linked to traditionally men-dominated areas are lower: Combat & Security (10.4%), Communications & Cyber (17.5%). Engineering and Maintenance (9.7%), and Aviation (16.6%). Compared to the previous year there were increases in women's participation in Aviation (0.2 percentage point increase) and Engineering, Maintenance & Construction (0.4 percentage point increase). Significant changes in women's participation in STEM-related roles will require broader societal change to address gendered patterns in STEM participation.

The ADF's gender pay gap remains smaller than the national average (ABS National Pay Gap). Army had a reduction in their pay gap (0.7 percentage point decrease), while Navy and Air Force remained stable or saw minor increases. Defence's strength lies in role-based pay rather than individual-based remuneration. However, complexities arise when considering for allowances and other forms of compensation.

Workplace experience survey results highlight persistent gender differences in perceptions of senior leadership, supervisor leadership, and morale. Women reported higher positivity than men regarding senior leadership. The percentage of women who experienced unacceptable behaviour was greater than men across all types included on the Workplace Behaviour Survey. Psychosocial Safety Climate scores indicate significantly more men than women fall into the low-risk category.

Flexible work arrangements emerged as a critical opportunity area. Women consistently expressed positive views regarding flexible options, particularly in relation to career opportunities and work-life balance. These arrangements are a key retention lever; however, disparities in uptake and concerns about career impact persist among men.

The ADF continues to demonstrate commitment to gender equity, with notable progress in some areas. However, there are still challenges in recruitment, retention, and representation in men-dominated roles. The ongoing work underway in identifying and addressing system barriers, enhancing flexible work options, and fostering culture change remains essential to achieving sustained improvement.