

Submission by:

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████████████████████  
Survivor | Advocate | Trauma-Informed Leadership Mentor  
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## Executive Summary

I am making this submission with a deep sense of purpose, a courageous heart, and an unwavering belief that the Australian Defence Force has the opportunity — right now — to become a global pioneer of cultural transformation.

My story is not an isolated incident.  
It is a reflection of systemic patterns that continue to harm the brave men and women who put their hands up to serve this nation.

I write this not from a place of blame, but from a place of truth, lived experience, and a passionate desire to turn pain into purpose so others won't endure what I did.

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## My Lived Experience

I joined the Defence Force as a young woman who believed the military was a place of honour, safety, purpose, and value — a place where I could contribute at the highest level and be part of something meaningful.

Instead, I endured 12 months of sexual harassment & assault by my immediate supervisor, who was much older..

I was traumatised at a time when I was incredibly vulnerable.

The long term abuse shattered not only my sense of safety but my entire identity. I was left unsupported, dismissed, and treated as though I were the problem — while my perpetrator was protected.

At one point, I was even posted away from my husband and everything familiar to me, just to protect him..

This only amplified the trauma, the isolation, and the emotional harm as I had many questions from others as to why I'd been posted out of cycle..

This event — and the way it was handled — changed the trajectory of my life.  
It affected my health, one of my daughter's health, my career, my emotional well-being, and the future of my family.

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## Systemic Failures

Over many years, I have witnessed — and personally endured — a culture that enables:

- silencing
- retaliation
- dismissal of lived experience
- minimisation of trauma
- a “protect the system” mentality
- a reactive instead of preventative approach

When I eventually spoke up, my perpetrator was found guilty.  
Yet the system still failed to support me... the only outcome was we were never to be posted on the same base again and I was immediately posted away having to deal with the repercussions from others who wanted to know why I had been posted out of cycle?

The court Marshall occurred in [REDACTED]

I received a formal apology from the Defence Force Ombudsman a couple years ago— and while I deeply appreciated the humanity shown in that meeting, the promised reforms never materialised.

I believed when they said to me that the processes were changing so others did not have to suffer as I and many had and the realisation now that is still continued has truly hurt me deeply... I realise I was lied to once again to tell me what I wanted to hear?

The cycle continues.  
Members are still suffering.  
Families are still breaking.  
And stories just like mine continue to appear in the media.

This is not a matter of isolated incidents — it is cultural.

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#### Long-Term Health Impacts

Over the past many years, both my daughter and I have battled debilitating autoimmune illnesses. Through my healing journey, I have learned how trauma embeds itself in the cells — and how epigenetics may have played a devastating generational role.

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#### The Emotional and Human Impact

[REDACTED] the Royal Commission opened wounds I had fought for years to heal.  
[REDACTED] story of sexual abuse or harassment in Defence re-triggers the same pain — because it confirms a painful truth:

The culture has not changed.

The promises I believed were signs of progress were simply words.

I believed my story would help protect others.  
But others are still being harmed.

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#### What I Am Calling For

I am not seeking sympathy.  
I am seeking change — real, preventative, sustainable change.

**\*\*My Proposal:**

**A Proactive, Human-Centred, Trauma-Informed Program for Defence\*\***

Drawing on my lived experience and more than a decade of training in emotional mastery, trauma recovery, nervous system regulation, and personal empowerment — including my work as a [REDACTED] — I propose:

A combined face-to-face and online training program designed to:

- Prevent sexual trauma, abuse, and psychological harm
- Equip recruits with emotional awareness, resilience, and self-protection tools by acknowledging the culture and how they are proactive to create change..
- Guide leaders to recognise trauma, intervene early, and create psychologically safe environments
- Transform culture from reactive crisis management to proactive prevention
- Honour the lived experiences of survivors
- Provide the education and tools I never had, that I do have now — tools that would have changed my entire trajectory

This framework is:

- Trauma-informed
- Evidence-based
- Empowering
- Sustainable
- Designed by someone who has lived it, healed from it, and understands both the emotional and physiological impacts deeply and I'd be happy to be part of a collective team working together to ensure the best program is created..

Defence has the opportunity to become the first major Australian institution to implement real, human-centred culture reform — and lead other industries forward.

This is legacy-level change.

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#### Final Statement

I stand before you today not as a victim, but as a woman who has rebuilt her life from the ashes of trauma.

A mother.

A former Defence member.

A leader.

A survivor.

And an advocate for deep, permanent cultural transformation.

My suffering will not be wasted if it helps prevent even one more person from breaking the way I once did.

I am ready, willing, and deeply committed to helping Defence co-create a future where safety, honour, compassion, and human dignity are not just values — but lived realities.

Thank you for considering my submission with the heart and humanity with which it is offered.

With purpose, courage, and unwavering commitment,

[REDACTED]