

Chapter 1

Introduction

Referral of inquiry

1.1 On 27 March 2014, the Senate referred an inquiry into the accessibility and adequacy of processes to support victims of abuse in Defence to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee for inquiry and report by 28 August 2014.¹ On 27 August 2014, the Senate agreed to extend the reporting date for the inquiry to 30 October 2014.² On 30 October 2014, the Senate extended the reporting date to 31 October 2014.

1.2 The terms of reference for the inquiry are as follows:

With reference to the committee's earlier report into the review of allegations of sexual and other abuse in Defence, the accessibility and adequacy of current mechanisms and processes to provide support to victims of sexual and other abuse in Defence, taking into account:

- (a) the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce (DART) process to date;
- (b) Defence's response to the DLA Piper Review and the work of DART;
- (c) successive governments' responses to the DLA Piper Review and the work of DART;
- (d) the desirability of releasing a true reflection of volume two of the DLA Piper report in a redacted form or by way of a summary; and
- (e) any related matters.

1.3 At the commencement of the inquiry, the committee made the following statement regarding the inquiry:

In terms of setting expectations, the committee emphasises that it is not in a position to resolve individual disputes or settle complaints about alleged abuse in Defence. As the terms of reference of the inquiry indicate, the committee's focus is on the processes established to manage and respond to such allegations. Please note that all documents sent to the inquiry become committee documents on receipt, and are only made public following a decision of the committee. Material which is not relevant to the inquiry's terms of reference or which reflects adversely on others may not be accepted or published by the committee.

1 *Journals of the Senate*, 27 March 2014, pp 743-744.

2 *Journals of the Senate*, 27 August 2014, p. 1313.

Conduct of the inquiry

1.4 The committee wrote to interested individuals and organisations requesting submissions by 2 June 2014 and advertised the inquiry on its website and in *The Australian*. The committee received 26 submissions, some of which were accepted by the committee as confidential. Other submissions were published with redactions as they contained personal information, adverse comment or material irrelevant to the inquiry. Public submissions are listed at Appendix 1 and are available on the committee's website at: www.aph.gov.au/senate/fadt.

1.5 The committee held public hearings for the inquiry in Canberra on 13 August 2014 and 26 September 2014. A list of the witnesses who appeared at the public hearings is available at Appendix 2, and the *Hansard* transcripts are available through the committee's website.

1.6 In relation to term of reference (d), the committee agreed secure access arrangements for Volume 2 of the DLA Piper Review with the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce (Taskforce) and the Minister of Defence, the Hon Senator David Johnston. Members of the committee had the opportunity to view Volume 2 of the DLA Piper Review at Parliament House on 17 July 2014, 1 August 2014 and 11 August 2014.

Structure of the report

1.7 The committee's report is in six chapters. Chapter 2 provides a background to the inquiry including the Defence cultural reviews, the DLA Piper Review, the establishment and progress of the Taskforce and the Pathway to Change reforms. Chapter 3 covers the Taskforce processes. Chapter 4 considers the response to the DLA Piper review report and the work of the Taskforce. Chapter 5 covers other matters raised during the inquiry, such as the release of Volume 2 of the DLA Piper report, access to veterans' entitlements and the need for a Royal Commission into abuse in Defence. Chapter 6 contains the committee's conclusion and recommendations.

Acknowledgements

1.8 The committee thanks all those who contributed to the inquiry by making submissions, providing additional information or appearing at hearings to give evidence. In particular, the committee wishes to acknowledge those victims of abuse in Defence who assisted the committee by sharing their personal experiences.

Note on references

1.9 References to the committee *Hansard* are to the proof *Hansard*. Page numbers may vary between the proof and the official *Hansard* transcripts.