

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Additional Estimates – 28 February 2018

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Defence

Topic: SSCFADT - AE - 28 Feb 18 - Q93 - Recruitment Females - Anning

Question reference number: 93

Senator: Fraser Anning

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 13 April 2018

Questions:

1. Does Defence discriminate between men and women when it comes to recruitment, for instance, at any time in the last 12 months have females been prioritised for recruitment into the Infantry over males?
2. In the Weekly Target Priorities recruitment spreadsheet, dated 7 August 17 and authored by Defence Force Recruiting, 'Artilleryman' was crossed out and listed in a red box. What does this mean?
3. In the Weekly Target Priorities recruitment spreadsheet, dated 7 August 17 and authored by Defence Force Recruiting, 'Artilleryman (F)' was listed in a green box. What does (F) mean, and what does the green box mean?
4. According to the 'Weekly Target Priorities' spreadsheet dated 7 August 2017, female applicants will be given higher priority than male applicants for roles in infantry, armour, artillery and combat engineers over the next 12 months. How does Defence explain this?
5. If females are not being prioritised, how does Defence explain this spreadsheet?
6. Please provide a breakdown of Reserve/Full Time females who were recruited into the Army for a role as a Rifleman:
 - a. How many commenced via the Army Pre-Conditioning Program?
 - b. How many completed the Army Pre-Conditioning Program?
 - c. How many commenced the Recruit Training Course at Kapooka?
 - d. How many completed the Recruit Training Course at Kapooka?
 - e. How many commenced Infantry Initial Employment Training?
 - f. How many completed Infantry Initial Employment Training?
7. What percentage of females who completed Infantry Initial Employment Training remains employed within a battalion?

8. Of those who are not in a battalion, what percentage:
 - a. Are serving in a role elsewhere within Defence while remaining categorised as Infantry?
 - b. Are serving elsewhere within Defence after a corps/service transfer?
 - c. Have discharged for medical reasons?
 - d. Have discharged for other reasons?
9. Of those serving within an infantry battalion, as at 28 February 2017, what percentage is classified as MEC 1?
10. How many male applied to be recruited for a role as a Rifleman in 2017?
11. What percentages of these were recruited?
12. Of those not recruited, what was the reason by percentage:
 - a. Deemed not suitable?
 - b. Deemed suitable but no positions available?
13. What is the average breakdown of leave days due to injury for males and females in the infantry corps since 2015?
14. Has there been any problem with sexually transmitted diseases at the School of Infantry since 2015? Please provide a breakdown of trainees suffering from sexually transmitted diseases at the School of Infantry since 2015 by gender?
15. What is the average number of days between completion of the Army Recruit Course and the commencement of the Infantry Initial Employment Training for males?
16. What is the average number of days between completion of the Army Recruit Course and the commencement of the Infantry Initial Employment Training for females?
17. Are trainees on the Army Pre-Conditioning Program legally Defence members and are they paid?
18. Why are non-indigenous males unable to attend the Army Pre-Conditioning Program?
19. Has Defence ever been subjected to a complaint to the Human Rights Commission about its treatment, promotion or prioritisation of females over males?
20. Has there been any consideration of forming an all-female unit within the Army?
21. Has there been any consideration of co-locating female infantry soldiers within a single unit?
22. What is the current status of any planning with regards to female units or co-location of female infantry soldiers?

Answers:

1. Women represented less than five per cent of all Infantry soldier recruits in 2017. Defence sets recruiting targets for men and women as a means to improve gender balance across Defence. If a suitable female has not been identified to fill a female designed target six weeks prior to the enlistment date, the position is offered to the next available and suitable male.
2. Artilleryman was crossed out and in a red box to indicate the role was oversubscribed with more applicants in the recruiting pipeline than positions available.
3. The (F) designates recruiting targets for Females. The green box indicates there are recruiting targets to fill in the following six month period.
4. As at 7 August 2017, the roles of infantry, armour, artillery and combat engineers had more applicants than positions available for male candidates. Conversely, the recruiting targets for women in these roles were under-subscribed so Defence Force Recruiting was directing effort to fill these roles as a priority. When a suitable female candidate is not found, the positions are filled by male candidates.
5. The spreadsheet of Weekly Target Priorities displays the status of recruiting target achievement for men and women in accordance with Defence capability needs.

To maintain and sustain optimal Defence capability, Defence must achieve a greater gender balance. Contemporary military operations are enhanced through the presence of women in all employment categories. Women deployed in combat roles can often engage more effectively with female combatants and females and children who are non-combatants in the area of operations. It is a practical disadvantage to have an all-male combat force which is operating in a culture where it is routinely forbidden for women to have interaction with males that are not family members.

6. The Army Pre-Conditioning Program is designed to assist women to meet the general entry-level fitness standards and build resilience to successfully complete the Army Recruit Course.

The Army Recruit Course is designed to prepare and train recruits to be soldiers in the Australian Army and commence their respective Initial Employment Training. Initial Employment Training is designed to train soldiers in their Employment Category or trade.

- a. Ten
- b. Eight
- c. Army Pre-Conditioning Program: Eight. Australian Regular Army: 95. Army Reserve: 49.
- d. Army Pre-Conditioning Program: Five. Australian Regular Army: 39. Army Reserve: 28.
- e. Army Pre-Conditioning Program: Five. Australian Regular Army: 39. Army Reserve: 28.
- f. Army Pre-Conditioning Program: Nil. Australian Regular Army: Ten. Army Reserve: 14

7. 100 per cent.

8. See question 7.

9. For women, 75 per cent of those currently serving in an Infantry Battalion had a medical classification of 1.

10. There were 2,977 male applicants who commenced the application process for full-time and part-time Infantry soldier in 2017. As at 1 January 2017, there was an additional 2,916 males with a preference for Infantry soldier who had submitted an application in previous years still in the recruiting pipeline.

11. Of the 2,977 male applicants in 2017, five per cent were enlisted. An additional 795 males who had applied in previous years progressed to enlistment in 2017. The total number of male Infantry soldiers enlisted in 2017 was 939 with 315 full-time and 624 part-time.

12.

a. Of the 2,977 males who applied for Infantry soldier in 2017, 81 per cent were deemed unsuitable, withdrew their application or were withdrawn from the recruitment process for various reasons.

b. Of the 2,977 male applicants in 2017, 13 per cent have completed all assessments and are ready for enlistment. There are an additional 29 male candidates who applied in previous years and have completed all assessments and are awaiting an enlistment date.

13. The average medical absences since 2015 for males is 15.9 days and for females 8.1 days.

14. Army is unaware of any specific trends or concerns relating to sexually transmitted infections at the School of Infantry since 2015. Specific data for trainees is unavailable; however, overall numbers of infections at the School of Infantry are very small over this period.

15. 28.5 days

16. 20.5 days

17. Yes.

18. The Army Pre-Conditioning Program is an entry avenue open to all women regardless of ethnicity or background. The program is not offered or available to male candidates as the Army Pre-Conditioning Program is a Special Measure under the Sex Discrimination Act.

19. Over the past five years, the Human Rights Commission has received three complaints about the treatment, promotion or prioritisation of females over males. In each of the above instances Defence was notified of the complaint and either provided a written response to the complaint or participated in a conciliation conference. Due to the Commission's non-disclosure obligations, we are not able to provide information about complaints.

20. The concept has been explored; however, has been discounted as unfeasible. The concept undermines the initiatives of Army's Good Soldiering cultural renewal program

to develop and integrate diverse and inclusive teams to meet the requirements of the current and future operating environment.

21. This is the current practice in the Regular Army with all female Infantry personnel being posted to 1 RAR in Townsville.

22. Army is currently consolidating the lessons learned from the removal of gender restrictions and integration of Women into Infantry to capitalise on the success of the venture to date. There is no intent to raise female only units; however, women will continue to be assigned to units in cohorts (rather than individually).