

# 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 - Q96 - Defence Gay and Lesbian Information Service (DEFGLIS) - Anning

**Question reference number:** 96

**Senator:** Fraser Anning

**Type of question:** Written

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

## Question:

1. Is the Defence Gay and Lesbian Information Service (DEFGLIS) a part of the Australian Defence Force?
2. Has DEFGLIS ever been given command or control of Defence personnel?
3. If the answer is no, how does Defence explain the 2013 Mardi Gras Administrative Instruction which was titled 'DEFGLIS Administrative Instruction (ADMININST) 01/2012'?
4. Would Defence consider it inappropriate if DEFGLIS members were using their network influence to exert pressure on the chain of command to take disciplinary action and termination action against Defence members who did not support their views?
5. Has Defence or senior Defence officers ever conferred with DEFGLIS members about media statements?
6. Has Defence or senior Defence officers ever received emails from DEFGLIS personnel requesting disciplinary action against non-DEFGLIS members?
7. How much money has Defence paid DEFGLIS since 2012?
8. DEFGLIS supported same-sex marriage. Is it appropriate that Defence has paid moneys to DEFGLIS or provided official support and or sponsorship of this organisation?
9. Are DEFGLIS members using Defence networks and IT systems to conduct DEFGLIS activities?
10. Is it appropriate that the DEFGLIS website details uniform requirements etc. for events such as the Mardi Gras? Does this not demonstrate that DEFGLIS is operating as a semi-

official part of the Defence Force even though it has no legal authority to do so?

11. A recent Defence-supported DEFGLIS dinner made reference to pockets of resistance. Can this be seen as a threat targeting Defence members who have concerns about female-prioritisation, sex-change operations and Defence involvement in political activities such as the Mardi Gras?

**Answer:**

1. No, the Defence LGBTI Information Service Incorporated (DEFGLIS) is a not-for-profit charity registered with the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission. DEFGLIS is an association that supports and represents Australian Defence Force LGBTI personnel and their families. Defence works collaboratively with DEFGLIS to support the LGBTI community by fostering an inclusive culture through networking, education and peer support.

2. No, DEFGLIS is a not-for-profit charity with no formal or direct authority over Defence personnel. There are instances where current serving ADF members and APS employees, who are incidentally members of DEFGLIS, have been authorised to act in an official capacity supervise and direct Defence personnel as part of events involving both Defence and DEFGLIS such as Mardi Gras. The authority to supervise and direct Defence personnel is granted in the course of their ADF or APS employment, and not as a result of their DEFGLIS membership.

3. This was an unintended document naming error; DEFGLIS should not have been included in the title. Administrative Instructions are Defence approved official documents. All Administrative Instructions relating to Mardi Gras have been correctly titled since 2013, e.g. Administrative Instruction – Sydney Mardi Gras 03 Mar 18.

4. Defence takes matters of conduct and discipline very seriously. Instances of inappropriate conduct are dealt with in accordance to the *Defence Force Discipline Act 1982* or the APS Code of Conduct in civilian matters and are investigated on their merits. The discipline system includes processes for the investigation of alleged offences, issuing of infringement notices for minor disciplinary offences or the preferring of charges and conduct of fair and impartial trials.

5. Yes, as part of Defence's process for preparing media statements, Defence consults with as many relevant parties as it deems necessary to gather all relevant information in the preparation of those statements. Defence has conferred with current ADF and APS personnel, some of whom are DEFGLIS members.

6. Senior Defence Officers deal with a range of workplace and disciplinary matters that occur in the course of Defence's daily operations. Defence deals with matters as they relate to current serving APS or ADF personnel. Complaints or allegations of inappropriate conduct are treated seriously regardless of their source, investigated on their merits, and managed in accordance to the *Defence Force Discipline Act 1982* or the APS Code of Conduct in civilian matters.

7. Between 1 January 2012 to 1 January 2018, Defence has paid \$28,774 to DEFGLIS to attend events, such as purchasing tables at the Military Pride Ball.

8. As part of its commitment to building an inclusive, diverse and capable workforce, Defence supports a range of DEFGLIS events.

9. Defence's ICT Manual applies to all users of Defence ICT resources and contains instructions that define acceptable use. Defence personnel may make reasonable use of the Defence ICT systems for the purpose of engaging in community and veteran support activities as well as those conducted by DEFGLIS and similar organisations.

10. DEFGLIS supports LGBTI serving members, ex-service members and veterans of the Australian Defence Force and their families. It is a volunteer-led and operated association. It would not be considered inappropriate for DEFGLIS to share relevant information about upcoming LGBTI events. Any official Defence information contained on the DEFGLIS webpages is cleared by Defence personnel prior to release.

11. No. The future success of the Defence organisation, and ultimately Australia's security, is reliant on Defence's capacity to attract and retain the best possible talent regardless of gender, race, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

Defence has undertaken significant steps to ensure a supportive, respectful and inclusive workforce for all personnel.