

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

Group: 2

Program: 1.1

Question No. BE15/022

Senator Lambie asked the following question at the hearing on 27 and 28 May 2015:

Senator LAMBIE: In relation to exactly when the ads went out and you called people forward, can you explain to me the procedure of how that was done?

Mr Hall: Yes, I can. To begin with, of course, there were a number of public announcements in relation to the task force, asking for people to come forward. That was the first step. The second step was to place public notices in national newspapers Australia wide on three or four separate occasions during 2013 primarily, but in 2012 and 2013. Advertisements were also placed in all of the service magazines—the Army, Navy, and Air Force magazines. There was also information provided to community radio and other ways of distributing information out in regional areas. There were also, I think, two Defgrams, or two internal Defence memorandums, sent to all people serving in Defence, describing the task force and encouraging any victims of abuse to come forward to the task force.

Senator LAMBIE: Would I be able to obtain a copy of exactly where they went and who they went to during the time?

Mr Hall: Yes, I can provide that this evening for you.

Senator LAMBIE: Thank you.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

There were a number of steps taken to raise awareness of the 31 May 2013 cut-off date for making a complaint of abuse to the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce:

- On 14 March 2013, the Minister for Defence announced the cut-off date in Parliament and issued a media release containing this information.
- The Taskforce updated its website (www.defenceabusetaskforce.gov.au) on 5 April 2013 to advise potential complainants of the cut-off date and outline the procedure for registering a complaint.
- The Taskforce sent an email to website subscribers advising them of the cut-off date.
- The Taskforce placed advertisements in the following 11 major metropolitan newspapers on four separate occasions on 20 April 2013, 11 May 2013, 25 May 2013 and 29 May 2013:
 - Adelaide Advertiser
 - Australian
 - Brisbane Courier Mail
 - Canberra Times
 - Daily Telegraph
 - Herald Sun – Melbourne

- Hobart Mercury
 - Melbourne Age
 - Northern Territory News
 - Sydney Morning Herald, and
 - West Australian.
- The Taskforce placed advertisements alerting potential complainants to the cut-off date in the Australian Financial Review on Friday 19 April 2013, Friday 10 May 2013, Friday 24 May 2013 and Wednesday 29 May 2013.
 - The Taskforce provided information about the cut-off date to the Department of Veterans' Affairs and ex-Service organisations.
 - The Taskforce distributed a media release publicising the cut-off date to the Service newspapers (Navy News, Army News and Air Force News) and to Public Service News (published on Monday 13 May 2013).
 - The Taskforce distributed a media release to print, online and broadcast media outlets on its media distribution list on 28 May 2013. The cut-off date was covered in regional papers, including the Queensland Times Ipswich, Ballarat Courier, and Wagga Daily Advertiser.
 - The Taskforce worked with Defence to communicate the cut-off date internally. Defence advised the Taskforce that the following ADF-wide communications were circulated:
 - DEFGRAM on 21 May 2013
 - CDF Signal on 22 May 2013
 - Navy News (online from 20 May 2013, print from 23 May 2013)
 - Air Force News (online 20 May 2013, print from 23 May 2013)
 - Army News (online from 20 May 2013, print from 23 May 2013)
 - CadetNet (online from 14 March 2013), and
 - Defence intranet site (from 14 March 2013)
 - On 28 May 2013, the then Minister for Defence and Attorney-General distributed a joint media release urging people considering reporting an allegation of sexual and other abuse in Defence to do so before 31 May 2013.