

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE**

**REFERENCES COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO RECRUITMENT & RETENTION  
OF DEFENCE PERSONNEL**

**SUBMISSION**

**Submission No:** 5

**Submittor:** Captain Kerry J Green

**Address:** PO Box 219  
MORPHETT VALE SA 5162

**Telephone No:** (05) 8326 8539

**Fax:** (05) 8326 8698 A/H 8386 1796

**E-Mail**

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**Attachments** Nil



**40 REGIONAL ARMY CADET UNIT  
NOARLUNGA TRAINING DEPOT  
DYSON ROAD LONSDALE S.A.**

**P.O. BOX 219 MORPHETT VALE S.A. 5162**

Tel: 8326 8539 Wed, Nights from 6.30pm Fax: 8326 8698 A/H 838617

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**The Secretary,  
Senate Foreign Affairs,  
Defence and Trade References Committee,  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600**



Dear Sir,

**SENATE INQUIRY INTO RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF DEFENCE  
PERSONNEL - SUBMISSION**

Reference: 1. Cadets - The Future (TOPLEY Review)

1. The current paucity of recruits into the Armed Forces can be attributed to the following reasons:

- Lack of recognition of skills obtained by Cadets (Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL))
- Poor input into Cadet Training by Regular and Reserve Forces of realistic Military skills
- Complete lack of liaison between Defence and Cadet forces for on-going recruitment
- Lack of available full time positions (Cutbacks due to civilianisation)
- Education and or fitness barring at Regional Recruiting Centres (Based in Policy)
- Un realistic time expectations on Reservists for Common Induction and other Training
- Poor community perception of the value of Defence Training

2. The Australian Services Cadets have long been recognised as a valuable source of recruits for the Defence Forces, however, little real work has been done in providing a system whereby Cadets see as a natural progression, a career in the Defence Forces. Most Cadets are qualified in Basic Military skills and in fact can produce a Service record to that effect, but when applying for Regular or Reserve positions they are "encouraged" not to admit their prior training for fear of being "given a hard time" by Instructors. Because of this outdated and ridiculous attitude a valuable resource is squandered. BARRIER TESTING at Regional recruiting Centres would ascertain the Cadet/Recruit's level of skills and a determination could be made as to the level of training needed which would provide a substantial savings in Recruit Training time.

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3. Instead of Cadets being viewed as a "nuisance" or at the "bottom of the food chain" (See TOPLEY) there needs to be an active program of interactive Training designed to produce a willingness on Cadets part to enlist in Regular or Reserve Service. A sports coach would train his juniors in all the basic skills of their game, the Military should do the same. There exists at the moment, among Senior Defence Policy makers a paranoia that Cadets will be seen to be involved in "war like" activities. They have forgotten that the parents of these Cadets are well aware of the Defence Forces and it aims and have encouraged their offspring to be involved, hoping it will foster a willingness to join the Services which they view as very desirable career opportunities.

4. I have witnessed a number of Senior Reserve Officers making an effort to give presentations to Cadets about the benefits of enlistment, however, it has been on an *ad hoc* basis and does not seem to be co-ordinated nationally. Similarly, presentations can quite often be counter productive with adolescents as they prefer a more "hands on" approach. The Committee could perhaps consider a co-ordinated approach, utilizing Foster Unit based recruiting specialists to make relevant recruiting nights which could be slotted into the Cadets normal training syllabus. Most Reserve and Regular Units have Regional Recruiting Specialists, usually of NCO or SNCO rank who, if properly briefed, could carry out such a program with their fostered Cadet Unit on a twice yearly basis.

5. The civilianisation of Defence Units and positions has brought about a negative perception of career opportunities by serving members and to a certain degree has 'de-skilled' the defence work force. While it can be argued that in peace time it is not necessary to have those various Corps, Regiments, Ships and Bases, the Government can not lose sight of the fact that our Defence Forces are a deterrent and do not train for peace. Civilianisation has in turn reduced the variety and number of positions in the Defence Forces with most advertising now slanted towards combat and related roles. In times past all Services were able to offer a variety of skills and most recruits, either Regular or Reserve were able to choose work areas which closely matched their civilian roles. It has become particularly noticeable that South Australia has closed or downsized a number of its long standing Reserve Units and there is well publicised discussions regarding the sale of Defence Bases. (RANR is poorly represented in this Region)

6. Lower socio - economic areas do not produce people with the same education standards as those in the higher brackets with the inevitable result that young people who may consider the Defence Forces as their 'best option' are barred. Were this the case some years ago, the ADF would not have some of the highly skilled and professional NCO's that it has today. The fitness barrier also needs review as it is presently used with out discretion, even for the Reserves, and again can cause good people to be turned away. This is the same problem that was addressed by the US armed forces in the late eighties because they faced the same problems with recruiting that we are facing today. (See H. Norman SCHWARZKOPF General US Army RTD - Autobiography)

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