



Australian Government

Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force

ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL



Australian Government

Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force

The Hon Richard Marles MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Deputy Prime Minister

I am pleased to give to you the Annual Report on the operations of the Inspector-General Australian Defence Force for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

This report has been prepared pursuant to section 110R of the *Defence Act 1903*.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.M. Gaynor', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

JM Gaynor CSC
Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force

12 December 2025

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THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL'S MESSAGE

The Office of the Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force (IGADF) maintained a high operating tempo during this reporting period, consistent with previous years. Submissions and referrals for inquiry or investigation reached a new record – more than double the previous reporting period's total, which had been the highest to date. All workload indicators reflected a significant and sustained increase in both volume and complexity of submissions and referrals. This upward trend has continued for five reporting periods, indicating ongoing growth in demand for and confidence in IGADF's work.



The increase in submissions and referrals reflects greater awareness among Australian Defence Force (ADF) members of their rights to make complaints and a stronger willingness to engage both with the military justice system and with IGADF as an independent and impartial complaint-handling body. Overall, the reporting period highlights expanding operational demands and growing confidence in the integrity and accessibility of the military justice system and the IGADF's oversight role.

On 16 August 2024, IGADF commenced an Inquiry into concerns that the military justice system had been, or could be, weaponised or abused in ways that cause harm. This followed the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, which examined perceptions of weaponisation and recommended the Inquiry as a priority (Recommendation 30) in its final report of September 2024.

The Inquiry is assessing the extent of any abuse, identifying systemic vulnerabilities, reviewing safeguards, and recommending improvements to ensure the system is effective, trusted, and fair. It is a whole-of-office initiative supported by a dedicated team and guided by an independent advisory panel.

Public submissions were open from 17 March to 22 June 2025. By 30 June 2025, 331 submissions had been received from current and former ADF members, families, and the public. From February to June 2025, questions on weaponisation were also included in IGADF Military Justice Performance Audit focus groups. The Inquiry was ongoing at the end of the reporting period.

As reported in the 2023–24 Annual Report, IGADF appointed an Inquiry on 31 October 2023 into the deaths of four Australian Army soldiers following the MRH-90 Taipan helicopter crash during Exercise TALISMAN SABRE on 28 July 2023. Public hearings commenced on 27 February 2024 in Brisbane. Over 15 months, nine hearing blocks were completed, with the final block held on 9 May 2025. The Inquiry was ongoing at the end of the reporting period.

On 9 September 2024, the Royal Commission delivered its final report to the Governor-General, which was tabled in Parliament the same day. The Government established a Commonwealth-led Implementation Taskforce within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to coordinate a whole-of-government response.

The Royal Commission issued 122 recommendations, 13 of which have direct implications for the IGADF. These recommendations aim to enhance independence, capability, and transparency through measures such as independent leadership, increased staffing control, trauma-informed practices, and expanded oversight responsibilities. They include inquiries into deaths (particularly suicides), systemic reviews, improvements to grievance and complaint processes, and more frequent military justice performance audits.

During the reporting period, IGADF began implementing Government-agreed recommendations that do not require legislative change, including planning to double the number of annual military justice performance audits.

Throughout the reporting period, IGADF supported the Implementation Taskforce, meeting regularly to discuss recommendations, the IGADF Twenty-Year Review, and future reform pathways. IGADF contributed to planning for legislative changes, funding requirements, and sequencing of implementation.

Established in late 2020, the IGADF Post-Inquiry Coordination Cell continued to support the Office of the Special Investigator, which is investigating alleged war crimes following the IGADF Afghanistan Inquiry. IGADF provided dedicated resources, authorised disclosure of relevant materials, and maintained active engagement with the Office of the Special Investigator Special Counsel Team. This support remains a key external priority.

From 26 March 2025, IGADF became an agency under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013* (Cth), following the introduction of the Public Interest Disclosure Rules 2025 (Cth). This authorisation allows IGADF to manage disclosures of suspected wrongdoing within the public sector, strengthening complaint and investigation processes and providing protections for whistleblowers. The change enhances integrity and accountability across the sector.

The Office of the IGADF actively supported the activities of the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO). This included providing information as part of a new audit assessing the effectiveness of Defence's administration of investigations, which also encompasses the activities undertaken using the IGADF's statutory powers. At the conclusion of the reporting period the audit was ongoing.

During the reporting period, the Office of the IGADF was staffed by Defence Australian Public Service (APS) employees provided by the Secretary for Defence and full- and part-time ADF members made available by the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF). External service providers were engaged for specialised capabilities. Increased complexity in military justice matters and new responsibilities arising from the Royal Commission heightened workforce demands. In response, IGADF implemented strategies focused on targeted recruitment, enhanced training, organisational design, and wellbeing initiatives, with preparations underway to expand and adapt the workforce for future priorities.

Staff undertook targeted training to maintain the skills and knowledge required to fulfil statutory functions. Key areas included inquiry writing and conduct, trauma-informed practices, vicarious trauma awareness, administrative law and compassionate foundations training. most notably, a significant number of staff completed a nationally recognised Certificate IV in Government Investigations. These initiatives demonstrate IGADF's commitment to building specialist capability and resilience.

During the statutory reporting period, a substantial increase in submissions and referrals, together with the need to support the final stages of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, its outcomes and the Implementation Taskforce, the ongoing commitment to assist the Office of the Special Investigator, and the conduct of the IGADF MRH-90 Inquiry, placed significant demands on IGADF inquiry and complaint-handling resources. These competing priorities inevitably affected the timeliness of some processes.

The Office remains focused on performing its principal functions – oversight of the ADF's military justice system, monitoring military police professional standards, conducting inquiries into service deaths, and considering complaints under the Redress of Grievance statutory scheme – in an independent, impartial, and fair manner.

INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY 2024 TO 30 JUNE 2025

PREAMBLE

The Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force (the Inspector-General, or IGADF) is an independent statutory appointment, established under Part VIII B of the *Defence Act 1903* (Cth) (the Defence Act). This legislation defines the Inspector-General's responsibilities, functions, and authority.

The position was created in 2003 following recommendations from the 2001 review of military justice in the ADF, conducted by former Justice Mr James Burchett QC. Operating independently from the ADF chain of command, the IGADF provides impartial oversight, integrity assurance, and inquiry functions. The role is central to maintaining the quality, fairness, and accountability of Australia's military justice system.

The Minister for Defence appoints the Inspector-General pursuant to section 110E of the Defence Act. Under section 110F of the Defence Act, the IGADF must be a person who "has knowledge of and experience in relation to military justice issues and an understanding of their relevance to the role of the Defence Force".

Mr James Gaynor CSC continued as the Inspector-General during this reporting period.

Section 110C of the Defence Act and the *Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force Regulation 2016* (Cth) Section 5 specifies the roles and functions of the Inspector-General.

The Inspector-General's functions are to:

- a. investigate or inquire into matters concerning the military justice system
- b. conduct performance reviews of the military justice system, including audits of Defence Force units, ships and establishments, at the times and in the manner the Inspector-General considers appropriate
- c. investigate or inquire into justice matters including the professional conduct of Military Police
- d. advise on matters concerning the military justice system, including making recommendations for improvement
- e. independently consider complaints by ADF members
- f. review complaints submitted by ADF members under the statutory Redress of Grievance complaint system

- g. investigate or inquire into the deaths of ADF members in service, where their death appears to have arisen out of, or in the course of, their service
- h. if directed by the Minister or the Chief of the Defence Force, investigate or inquire into a matter
- i. promote military justice values across the Defence Force
- j. do anything incidental or conducive to the performance of the IGADF's other functions

The IGADF provides a formal avenue for any person to raise concerns regarding the military justice system or specific military justice processes. Through independent inquiries, investigations, and audits, these concerns are subject to impartial and competent review. Such activities may reveal shortcomings in existing policies, procedures, or systems. Where issues are identified, the IGADF may issue recommendations aimed at addressing and improving those areas.

STRATEGIC PLAN

During the statutory reporting period, preparations commenced to review and update the IGADF Strategic Plan 2023–2025. This key document outlines the Office’s strategic goals and the high-level approaches to achieving them. Central to the Plan is the IGADF’s commitment to being a trusted entity for all stakeholders and to promoting fairness within the ADF.

The Strategic Plan articulates the IGADF’s vision, mission, and values, aligning the Office’s broad functions and guiding its diverse and dynamic workforce. The recent review assessed progress and introduced necessary adjustments to ensure the Office continues to work collectively toward fulfilling its mission and responding effectively to emerging challenges. This review also ensured the updated plan reflects new Government priorities arising from the implementation of recommendations of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. This program of work will need to be factored into future planning and is expected to influence the activities of the Office significantly.

The IGADF vision, mission and values are:



Vision: Trusted to independently examine concerns about Defence



Mission: Provide an avenue for impartial, fair and independent outcomes, and oversight of matters concerning Defence

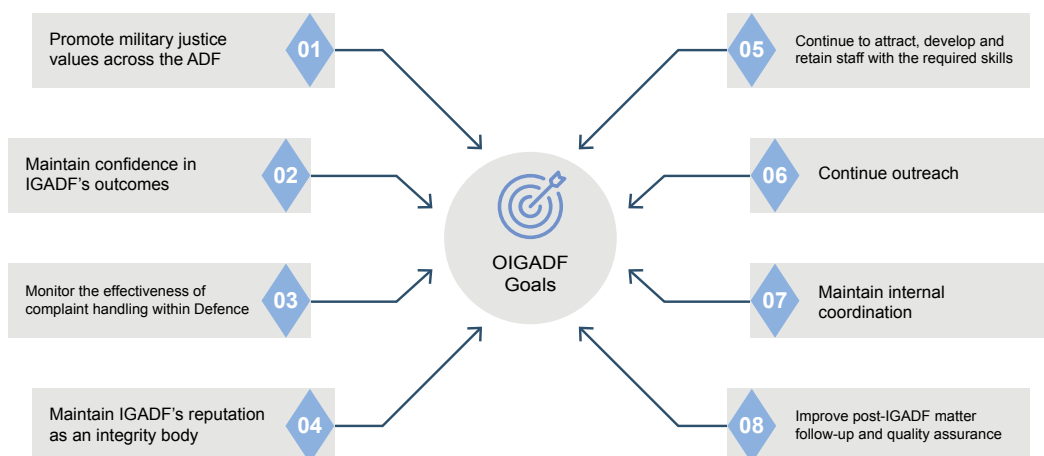


Values: Respect. Integrity. Independence. Impartiality. Fairness.



The current plan includes 8 strategic goals to achieve the IGADF vision, and are listed below.

1. Promote military justice values across the ADF – Contributing to a fair and effective military justice system improves the operational effectiveness of the ADF.
2. Maintain confidence that IGADF’s outcomes are fair, impartial, accurate, and timely – The IGADF makes decisions and recommendations on a range of matters relating to the ADF. The outcomes of such matters, including assessments, reports and correspondence, must be timely, fair and accurate.
3. Monitor the effectiveness of complaint handling within Defence – The ADF and the Australian public must be confident in the integrity of the complaint handling process.
4. Maintain IGADF’s reputation as a trusted and respected integrity, oversight and inquiry body – The identification of military justice systemic failures and flaws is important to minimise unacceptable behaviour and other misconduct in the ADF.
5. Continue to attract, develop and retain staff with the required attitude and aptitude to undertake the work of the IGADF – A professional, skilled and motivated workforce is key to enabling the IGADF to fulfil his statutory role.
6. Continue outreach – The IGADF operates in an increasingly public way. Community and stakeholder engagement occurs at all levels within IGADF and it is a core activity supported by all staff.
7. Maintain internal coordination – The IGADF coordination practices are fundamental to ensuring the office achieves effective and efficient outcomes for individuals and organisations involved in an IGADF matter.
8. Improve post-IGADF matter follow-up and quality assurance – IGADF is a review body and examines Defence issues to identify and remedy suspected failures in the military justice system. After the Office has examined an issue its role changes. Part of the role becomes Departmental liaison and post-inquiry witness follow-up.



Strategic commitment of the IGADF

Through continuous review of its Strategic Plan, the Office of the IGADF ensures its processes evolve to support the achievement of its mission and vision. The IGADF is dedicated to:

- oversight of the military justice system,
- providing an independent avenue for investigating and remedying alleged failures,
- remaining impartial in all operations, decisions and recommendations, and
- upholding integrity and maintaining the independence of the IGADF

These principles guide the Office's decisions and recommendations, reinforcing its role as a trusted and impartial body, independent from the ADF chain of command.

MILITARY JUSTICE SYSTEM

The military justice system provides the ADF with a legal framework that supports military discipline, reinforces command structures, and enhances operational effectiveness. It applies to all ADF personnel, whether serving in Australia or overseas, and in both peacetime and armed conflict.

A well-functioning military justice system is essential to the operational capability of the ADF. It ensures a balance between individual rights and the need for an ordered, equitable working environment for our ADF personnel. The system promotes Service discipline, corrects performance and behaviour when necessary, and offers avenues for complaints and redress. The military justice system plays a vital role in maintaining command integrity, organisational reputation, personnel retention, and compliance with Commonwealth laws.

The Office of the IGADF conducts regular audits to ensure the military justice system remains fair and effective. It supports leaders at all levels in maintaining discipline while also safeguarding the rights of ADF members to be treated with respect and receive a fair hearing. Maintaining this balance between discipline and individual rights is essential to strengthen the effectiveness of the ADF. If the balance is compromised, the IGADF can recommend changes to address both individual and systemic issues.

The ADF military justice system has 4 main components. These are:

- a. disciplinary investigations, prosecutions and proceedings (including disciplinary infringements, commanding officer and superior summary proceedings, and Court Martial and Defence Force Magistrate proceedings) under the *Defence Force Discipline Act 1982*
- b. adverse administrative action, including administrative sanctions (for example, censures and formal warnings) and involuntary separation from the ADF
- c. the conduct of administrative inquiries, including Fact Finding and Inquiry Officer Inquiries
- d. review and complaint mechanisms, including complaints under the statutory Redress of Grievance complaint system available to ADF members

IGADF MRH-90 INQUIRY

On 31 October 2023, IGADF appointed an inquiry to rigorously examine the circumstances and causes of the deaths of Captain Danniell Lyon, Lieutenant Maxwell Nugent, Warrant Officer Class Two Joseph Laycock, and Corporal Alexander Naggs resulting from the crash of an Australian Army MRH-90 Taipan helicopter while conducting night-time training during Exercise TALISMAN SABRE on 28 July 2023.

Written submissions to the Inquiry were thoroughly considered, providing valuable assistance to the Inquiry's work. Public hearings were conducted over a 15-month period in nine separate blocks. To ensure compassionate engagement, a dedicated Family and Witness Support Team was established to assist families of the deceased aircrew and support witnesses throughout the process. The Inquiry requested 140 witnesses to give evidence. Some witnesses were not required to attend in person after their statements were accepted, while 120 provided oral testimony, with several appearing more than once. Hearings were structured to minimise distress and maintain dignity for all participants.

Key features of the hearing process included:

- private and secure waiting areas for witnesses and their support persons
- ability to refer to their own statement while giving testimony
- option to have a support person present during evidence giving process
- respectful, open-format questioning by Counsel Assisting
- breaks available at any time upon the witness's request, without needing to provide a reason

The Inquiry was ongoing at the end of the reporting period. More information about the Inquiry can be found on the IGADF website.

IGADF WEAPONISATION INQUIRY

On 16 August 2024, the IGADF commenced an own initiative inquiry into allegations and perceptions that the military justice system had been, or had the potential to be, 'weaponised' or abused. At the end of the reporting period, the Inquiry remained ongoing.

The Inquiry is examining the extent of any Weaponisation or abuse and identifying those features of the military justice system that may allow for abuse or create perceptions of injustice. The Inquiry will evaluate existing protective factors and recommend improvements to ensure the military justice system is trusted, effective and fair.

In particular, the Inquiry will consider and make recommendations about:

- what is meant by the term 'weaponisation of the military justice system'
- to what extent military justice system processes appear to have been abused within the Australian Defence Force

- which military justice system processes are most susceptible to abuse
- what the key reasons and causes for such behaviour and actions are
- what mechanisms exist for identifying potential abuse of the military justice system and for holding commanders to account who are found to abuse military justice processes and whether these mechanisms are effective
- how any abuses might be minimised or eliminated

The Inquiry is in line with the Government's agreement to Recommendation 30 of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. Recommendation 30 was that the IGADF initiate an inquiry into the weaponisation of the military justice administrative system before the end of 2024.

The Inquiry's terms of reference are wider than the Royal Commission's recommendation. The Inquiry is considering all aspects of the military justice system, not only the administrative system but also the discipline system.

This Inquiry is a whole-of-office initiative. It is led by the IGADF and supported by a dedicated Inquiry team. The work of the Inquiry is also informed by guidance from an independent Advisory Panel of 4 eminent Australians:

- Her Honour Sylvia Emmett AM RAN (Retd)
- Emeritus Professor Rosalind Croucher AM
- Doctor Nikki Jamieson
- Warrant Officer Janet Brennan

After initial scoping, planning and consultation, the Inquiry opened to public submissions from 17 March to 22 June 2025. By 30 June 2025, the Inquiry had received 331 submissions from current and former ADF members, their families, and members of the public. From February to June 2025, questions on weaponisation were also included in IGADF Military Justice Performance Audit focus groups.

More information about the Inquiry can be found on the IGADF website.

POST AFGHANISTAN INQUIRY COORDINATION CELL

The Post Afghanistan Inquiry Coordination Cell (PICC) was established within the Office of the IGADF in late 2020 to address ongoing matters relating to the IGADF Afghanistan Inquiry. During the reporting period, PICC continued to support the very important work of the Office of the Special Investigator by authorising disclosure of inquiry-related material, maintaining active engagement with the Special Counsel Team, and facilitating consistent, timely requests for information relating to complex legal and systemic issues identified in the IGADF Afghanistan Inquiry.

DIRECTORATE OF STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES

The Directorate of Strategic Human Resources delivers corporate enabling functions that support the Office of the IGADF. The team includes three Human Resource specialists who work closely with the IGADF senior executives and the directorates to deliver human capital programs and activities. The Directorate's enabling functions include:

- workforce planning and management
- talent acquisition and management
- learning and career development pathways
- tailored workforce strategies and solutions

The Office of the IGADF continues to experience an increase in the scale and complexity of submissions and referrals related to the military justice system. This increased demand reflects stronger confidence in the IGADF's independence and higher expectations for transparent, carefully considered outcomes. This, combined with new responsibilities arising from the Government's response to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, has placed additional pressure on the workforce, both operational and corporate teams. These pressures were felt during this statutory reporting period and will continue to place additional demands on the workforce beyond the current reporting period.

Our approach

The workforce response to these increasing demands requires a coordinated strategy that balances specialist skills with overall organisational strength. The Office of the IGADF is building capacity by investing in workforce skilling, improving structures, and aligning resources with current priorities and anticipated future needs.

Enhanced training and professional development

The Office continues to prioritise training in inquiry and investigations, audit, and trauma-informed practices to build specialist capability across the workforce. During this statutory reporting period, the Office of the IGADF introduced the inaugural Certificate IV in Government Investigations and delivered a range of targeted training and development activities.

Targeted recruitment

The Office enhanced recruitment strategies to attract the right people into the right roles. Job advertisements were tailored to highlight each role's unique value, align recruitment with current and future priorities, and with deliberate assessments to test both technical skills and cultural fit.

Organisational design and succession planning

The Office refined the organisational structures to support career pathways and succession planning, ensuring long-term capability and growth.

The Office of the IGADF has a strong commitment to a trauma-informed culture, staff wellbeing, and flexible resourcing, ensuring staff remain resilient and effective under pressure. Wellbeing is supported by key activities from the IGADF Wellbeing Plan 2023–2025. The Plan outlines how the Office of the IGADF supports all personnel, including external workforce, to maintain their mental and physical health with particular emphasis on managing risks related to exposure to objectionable material.

As Government decisions shape the future direction of the Office of the IGADF, preparations are underway to adapt by expanding the workforce, refining core functions, and strengthening capability across key corporate and operational areas.

Staffing

The Office of the IGADF comprises a combination of personnel from both the APS and the ADF. These staff are provided to the Office by the Secretary of the Department of Defence and the Chief of the Defence Force. Where there is a requirement for specialised capabilities, the Office engages external service providers to supplement the workforce. The IGADF workforce is geographically dispersed, although most full-time staff are based in Canberra, working from the Office's premises in Brindabella Park.

During the 2024–25 statutory reporting period, staffing increased by 30 per cent, reaching 211 personnel across the ADF and the APS. ADF Reserve numbers increased by 48.5 per cent, while full-time ADF and APS staffing increased by 1.7 per cent.

ADF Reserve members form a significant part of the IGADF workforce, representing a broad mix of ranks and services. Their numbers have steadily increased each year, including during this statutory reporting period. Working alongside full-time personnel, Reserve members contribute essential expertise across legal, command, personnel, and general service domains. During this reporting period, 143 Reserve ADF members provided specialist capability to the Office across both the operational and corporate teams.

Table 1 below shows the headcount of staff, broken down by service, permanent and non-ongoing/Reserve.

Table 1: Office of the IGADF staffing breakdown for the statutory reporting period 2024–25

Service	Permanent headcount	Reserve / Non-ongoing headcount
Statutory Office Holder	0	1
Civilian	46	0
Navy	3	31
Army	5	20
Air Force	4	10
SERVOP C	2	0
MOU/MLS	7	82
Total	67	144

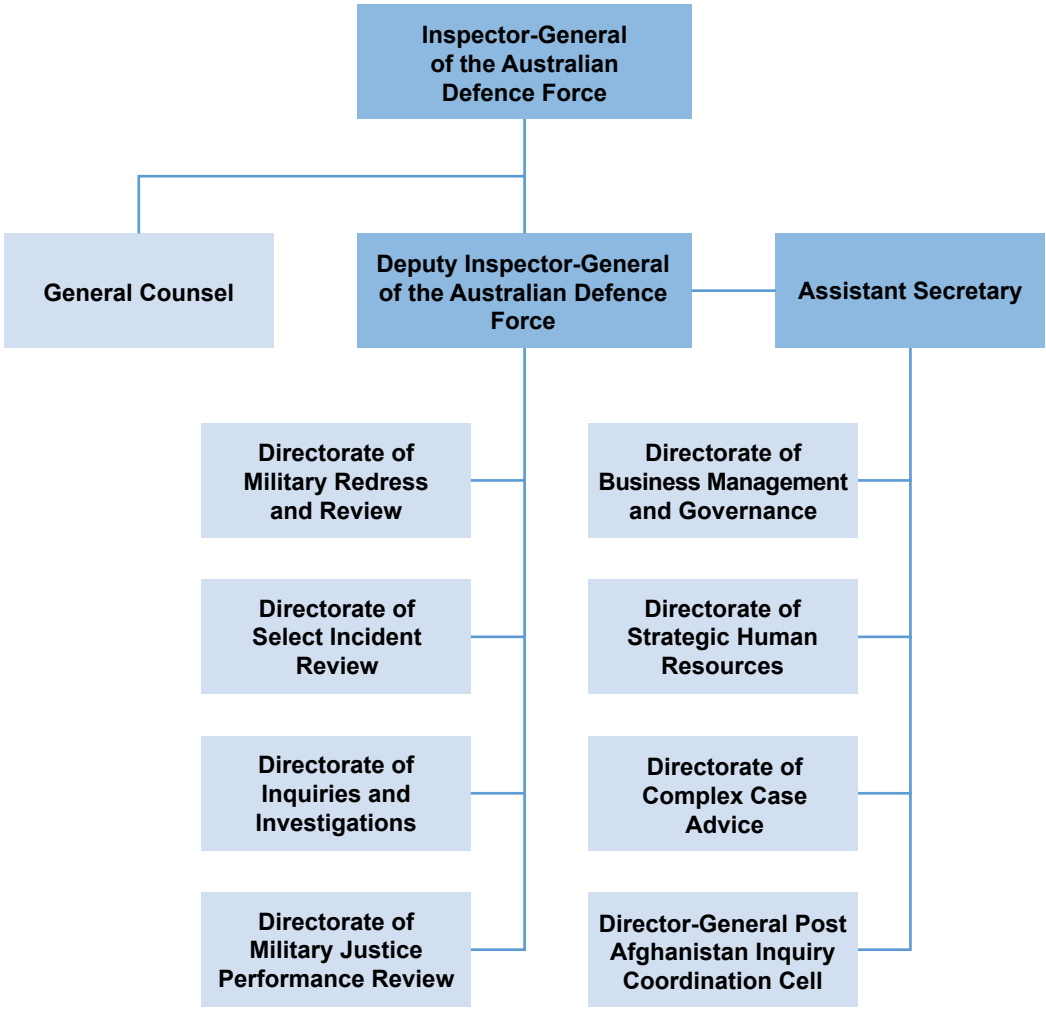
Organisational Structure

The Office of the IGADF consists of 9 directorates – 5 operational directorates and 4 enabling directorates. These are:

- General Counsel
- Military Redress and Review
- Inquiries and Investigations
- Select Incident Review
- Military Justice Performance Review
- Business Management and Governance
- Strategic Human Resources
- Complex Case Advice
- Post-Afghanistan Inquiry Coordination

The majority of these directorates are comprised of an integrated workforce of APS employees and full-time and Reserve ADF members. The Office of the IGADF's organisational structure is designed to support the efficient and effective delivery of the IGADF's statutory functions and responsibilities. The diagram below shows the IGADF organisational structure.

Office of the IGADF organisational structure (as at 30 June 2025)



Professional Development

Staff within the Office of the IGADF possess extensive experience and represent a diverse range of professional disciplines. Their collective expertise encompasses legal practice, administrative inquiries, law enforcement, public policy and administration, and human resource management.

The Office of the IGADF continues to improve its learning and development strategies to support its important work. During this reporting period, staff took part in a range of targeted training and development activities, in addition to completing Defence Mandatory Annual Awareness Training for both APS employees and ADF members. These tailored programs build the specific workforce skills needed to carry out the wide variety of work the Office undertakes. This encompassed the most current approaches to delivering trauma-informed responses. Staff took part in training programs focused across several areas, including:

- self-care and well-being
- trauma-informed practices
- a structured and informative Office of the IGADF induction program
- plain language and clear communication
- a nationally recognised investigations qualification

In September 2024, the Office of the IGADF introduced a tailored Certificate IV in Government Investigations (PSP40416). This nationally recognised qualification, delivered by Public Sector Training Solutions (RTO 52140), reflects the Office's continued commitment to strengthening staff capability.

During the 2024–25 statutory reporting period, 19 staff members successfully completed the inaugural Certificate IV course, with an additional 3 staff members attaining the qualification through Recognition of Prior Learning.

Table 2 below outlines Office of the IGADF bespoke professional development activities over this statutory reporting period.

Table 2: Professional development activities statutory reporting period 2024–25

Activity	2024–25	
	Sessions	Participants
Self-care & well-being toolkit	3	43
Trauma-informed practices	2	26
IGADF induction	2	35
Plain language and clear communication	3	23
Certificate IV in Government Investigations	1	22

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The Directorate of Business Management and Governance provides corporate enabling services within the Office of the IGADF. The Business Management and Governance team are experienced corporate professionals, specialising in business administration, who provide strategic and operational support across a range of corporate enabling functions. The Directorate works in close collaboration with 2 other directorates, the Directorate of Strategic Human Resources and the Directorate of Complex Case Advice, to ensure integrated and responsive support to the Office of the IGADF.

The business enabling functions delivered by the Directorate of Business Management and Governance include:

- executive coordination and administrative support
- management of the provision of consultancy services for the Office
- financial management
- procurement activities
- corporate governance and compliance activities
- Freedom of Information requests
- Public Interest Disclosure (PID)
- travel management
- work health and safety
- security and vetting
- information and records management
- accommodation and facilities management

Professional service providers

At times, the IGADF engages professional service providers on a non-ongoing basis to deliver specialist expertise and advice. These providers are selected to meet specific needs that require technical knowledge or specialised professional skills.

The Office of the IGADF follows the Commonwealth Procurement Rules when sourcing goods and services, including those from external providers. All contracts valued over \$10,000 are published on the AusTender website, unless they are subject to confidentiality provisions or if publishing them could compromise the integrity of an inquiry or investigation.

Public Interest Disclosure (PID)

Effective 26 March 2025, the Office of the IGADF was formally recognised as an agency under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013* (Cth) (the PID Act). This change followed the commencement of the *Public Interest Disclosure Rules 2025* (Cth).

As a result, the IGADF is now authorised to receive and manage public interest disclosures in accordance with the PID Act. The PID Act establishes a framework that supports the reporting of suspected wrongdoing within the public sector, ensuring such reports are investigated promptly and effectively.

The public interest disclosure scheme enhances existing mechanisms for complaints and investigations, while also offering protections and support to individuals who make disclosures under the PID Act. This development strengthens the integrity and accountability of the public sector.

Freedom of Information requests

During the reporting period, the Office of the IGADF was the subject of significant public interest in relation to information about its processes and managed 54 Freedom of Information (FOI) matters. This comprised of 52 new FOI applications, with 2 carried over from the previous reporting period. Of these, 26 were requests for consultation with the Office, 20 resulted in releases under the Freedom of Information Act, 3 were finalised through administrative release, 2 were withdrawn prior to a decision and 3 remained under consideration at the end of the reporting period.

ANAO audit into the administration of Defence investigations

During the 2024–25 reporting period the ANAO commenced a new audit that is assessing the effectiveness of the Department of Defence’s administration of investigations. ANAO has established two criteria to guide and measure the effectiveness of investigative arrangements:

- Has Defence established fit-for-purpose arrangements for the conduct of investigations?
- Has Defence effectively implemented its arrangements for investigations?

While the Office of the IGADF is independent of Defence, and operates outside of the normal chain of command, there are shared goals and learnings that come from our oversight of the military justice system for the ADF and its members. The Office supports the audit’s objectives and its participation further reinforces our commitment to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement in the oversight of the military justice system.

The Office of the IGADF provided significant briefing material and held information sessions to inform ANAO staff of the approach adopted in the administration of investigations. The IGADF also responded to 2 formal requests for information, encompassing 17 evidence requests, which addressed specific investigative practices and procedures; and assistance was provided to Defence to respond to a separate information request. At the conclusion of the reporting period the audit was ongoing, with the ANAO expected to issue its report in 2025–26.

Persistent and competing demands throughout the reporting period significantly challenged the Office's overall operational effectiveness and ability to meet core functions. Timeliness in undertaking some activities was at times reduced while resources were dedicated to support the very important work of external processes. This included: providing significant assistance to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Implementation Taskforce led by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; supporting the Office of the Special Investigator's war crimes investigations; and responding to the ANAO's audit into the administration of Defence investigations.

DIRECTOR COMPLEX CASE ADVICE

The Director of Complex Case Advice provides specialist support in IGADF processes by reviewing correspondence to ensure it is trauma-informed and by helping participants understand not only the processes themselves but also where to access legal and welfare support. When required, the Director engages directly with complainants, witnesses, and potentially affected persons to clarify information, explain IGADF processes and provide reassurance during complex or sensitive matters.

During the reporting period, the Director played a critical role in supporting complex and sensitive matters within IGADF. This included providing tailored advice and detailed case notes to the assigned Assistant Inspector-General, assisting with inquiries that required sustained engagement, and guiding alternative pathways where appropriate. The Director ensured correspondence was drafted using trauma-informed language, promoting clarity and sensitivity for recipients. The role also involved ongoing support for long-running cases, coordination of activities between phases, and facilitation of attendance at hearings and related events. Through these efforts, the Director contributed significantly to maintaining transparency, fairness, and care in the IGADF's handling of complex cases.

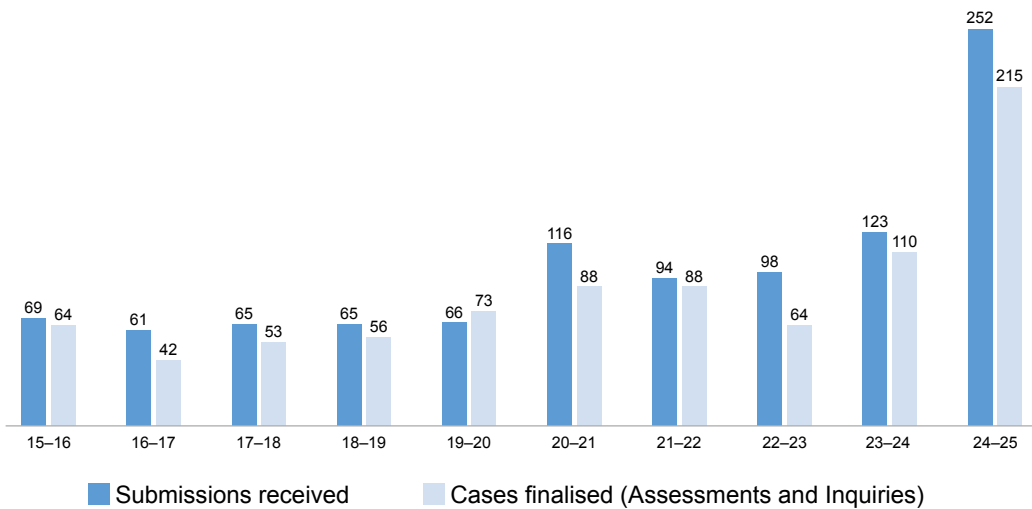
DIRECTORATE OF INQUIRIES AND INVESTIGATIONS

The Directorate of Inquiries and Investigations provides support to the IGADF for the conduct of assessments, inquiries, and investigations into reported failures of military justice in the ADF. These matters may originate from individual submissions or be referred by the CDF, Defence Groups and Services, or other government agencies, such as the Ombudsman. The Directorate of Inquiries and Investigations is also responsible for examining complaints related to the professional conduct of Military Police personnel.

Submissions and referrals to the Inspector-General of the ADF

During the 2024–25 reporting period, the IGADF received 252 submissions and referrals for inquiry or investigation, which is the largest number ever received by the Office. This is more than double the total received in 2023–24, which itself was a record-setting year for the number of submissions. This significant increase points to a growing awareness of the IGADF as an avenue to raise complaints outside the ordinary chain of command. It also reflects confidence in the IGADF's impartiality and independence as a resource to review failures of the military justice system. There are early indications that the trend in higher submissions will continue to increase in the next reporting period.

Graph 1: Submissions received and cases finalised by statutory reporting period



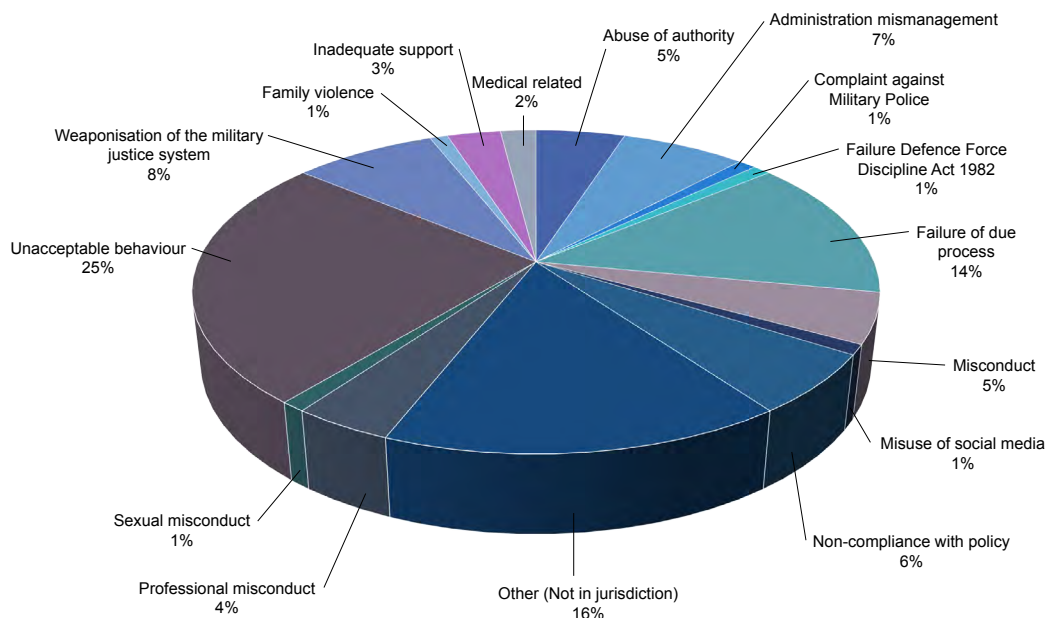
Note: The 23-24 submission figures of 123 and 110 is a correction from last year's reported figures of 120 and 107.

As shown in Graph 2 below, complaints covered a wider range of categories than in previous years. The largest proportion of complaints fell into the unacceptable behaviour category. Even though unacceptable behaviour complaints declined from 48 per cent of the total submissions in 2023–24, to 25 per cent in this reporting period, the actual number of submissions this 12-month period was 63, which is higher than the number of similar submissions received in the previous 12-month period, which was 57.

Other sizeable categories included; other (not in jurisdiction) (16 per cent, or 41 submissions), failure of due process (14 per cent, or 35 submissions), and weaponisation of the military justice system (8 per cent, or 21 submissions). This is the first time that the IGADF has used the weaponisation of the military justice system category.

Submissions to the IGADF Inquiry into Weaponisation of the Military Justice System were de-identified for combined reporting, and if the complainant requested further action, referred to the Directorate of Inquiries and Investigations for investigation outside the Inquiry.

Graph 2: Complaint categories for statutory reporting period 2024–25



Submissions received that were outside the military justice jurisdiction of the Office of the IGADF included civil matters, criminal matters including fraud allegations, entitlements disputes, housing disputes, honours and awards, ADF Careers performance, welfare concerns, use of social media, and complaints about medical services.

Office of the IGADF staff engaged with complainants to identify and understand any barriers they had faced in resolving their complaint. Where a complainant had not initially raised their concerns through their chain of command or line management, IGADF staff worked with them to understand why, and where appropriate to facilitate resolution through the appropriate channels.

Where submissions fell outside of the jurisdiction of the IGADF, or were better suited for command review, IGADF staff referred them to the appropriate organisations subject to the complainant’s full engagement and consent. The team worked with some complainants to ensure criminal matters were referred promptly to the appropriate Defence Investigative Authority or civilian police.

Triaging submissions

During the previous statutory reporting period, the IGADF established a triaging team within the Directorate of Inquiries and Investigations which has, over time, matured into a core capability. The triage model has demonstrated its effectiveness through early engagement with individuals who intend to make a submission, and to identify any appropriate alternative

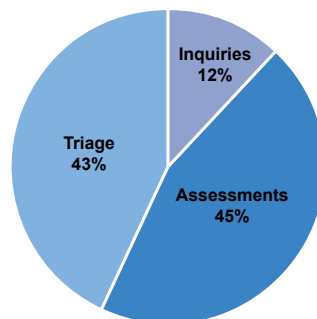
resolution pathways or to confirm the necessity of the involvement of the Office of the IGADF. This structured approach has enabled case officers to allocate their efforts more strategically, focusing on complex military justice matters and thereby enhancing both the timeliness and quality of case outcomes.

The Directorate of Inquiries and Investigations resolved 215 matters during the 2024–25 statutory reporting period, compared to 110 matters in the previous reporting period (as reflected in Graph 1).

Graph 3: Cases closed in statutory reporting period 2024–25

Of the 215 matters resolved in 2024–25:

- 27 (12.6 per cent) were finalised inquiries
- 96 (44.7 per cent) were resolved by assessments
- 92 (42.8 per cent) were resolved by the triage process



Military justice inquiries

IGADF inquiries serve a dual purpose: they provide resolution for individual complainants, and generate valuable insights into systemic issues across Defence. Outcomes from inquiries have directly informed improvements in policy, training, and command practices, reinforcing the IGADF’s role in promoting accountability and continuous improvement.

During the 2024–25 statutory reporting period, the Directorate of Inquiries and Investigations commenced 26 inquiries and finalised 27. This represents an increase from the 2023–24 reporting period, in which 22 inquiries commenced and 19 were finalised.

The increase in matters progressing to inquiry in 2024–25 is consistent with the increased rate of submissions received in 2023–24. Most submissions within the IGADF’s jurisdiction typically undergo a detailed assessment before a decision to initiate an inquiry. The time between receiving a submission and commencing an inquiry can span across reporting periods, reflecting the structured assessment process. As a result, the higher number of new submissions received in 2024–25 may lead to an increase in inquiries commencing in the next reporting period.

The increasing volume and complexity of concurrent matters being managed by the Directorate of Inquiries and Investigations continues to place considerable pressure on its integrated workforce. The Directorate comprises full-time and part-time ADF members, APS employees, contracted legal professionals with inquiry expertise and, where necessary, specialist consultants engaged for their technical knowledge. The growing demand for services, combined with the regular movement of experienced personnel through posting cycles, reinforces the need to continually recruit, develop, and retain skilled staff, to support the continued delivery of high-quality inquiry outcomes.

The Directorate's responsiveness during the reporting period was constrained, at times, by ongoing cumulative demands that stretched resources. This resulted in delays to its functions while staff continued to also support the very important work of external processes. Directorate staff had significant involvement in supporting the work of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Implementation Taskforce and the ANAO's audit into the administration of Defence inquiries.

The Directorate remains committed to enhancing its processes and places particular emphasis on continuously refining its trauma-informed practices across all areas of work. Staff consistently consider the unique needs of individuals experiencing mental health challenges, adopting flexible timelines, diverse engagement methods, and tailored communication strategies. While these approaches require consideration be given to resources, they are vital to maintaining the integrity and compassion of the inquiry process. This commitment reflects the IGADF's dedication to ensuring military justice matters are addressed with fairness, respect and transparency.

Military Police Professional Standards

The IGADF Military Police Professional Standards team are responsible for conducting investigations or inquiries into alleged policing misconduct. When a matter is received, the Professional Standards team will assess known facts to determine the best approach for case management. These options may include referral to an appropriate agency or service, Administrative Inquiry or Discipline Investigation under the *Defence Force Discipline Act 1982* (Cth).

Where a complaint relates to aspects of discipline or behaviour not related to Military Policing duties or powers, the matter is referred back for management by the serving member's chain of command. In all instances where adverse findings are made about a Military Police member, their suitability to continue serving in the role is determined by the IGADF Professional Standards team.

During the reporting period, the IGADF Professional Standards team has continued to refine internal processes and enhance report writing to drive greater efficiency. Key improvements include the implementation of a strengthened triage and assessment framework, as well as empowering unit commanders to manage appropriate incidents at the unit level. These measures have led to improved case management timeframes, enabling the team to focus more effectively on outcome reviews and suitability assessments.

The IGADF Professional Standards team has introduced targeted education briefings and strengthened engagement with ADF Military Police to improve understanding of the Code of Conduct and IGADF procedures. This proactive approach has enabled earlier engagement with Military Police, beginning during initial employment training, and continued through tailored upskilling within their posted units. These efforts have contributed to a more informed and capable workforce that is better equipped to apply the Code of Conduct in practice.

Complaint statistics and performance

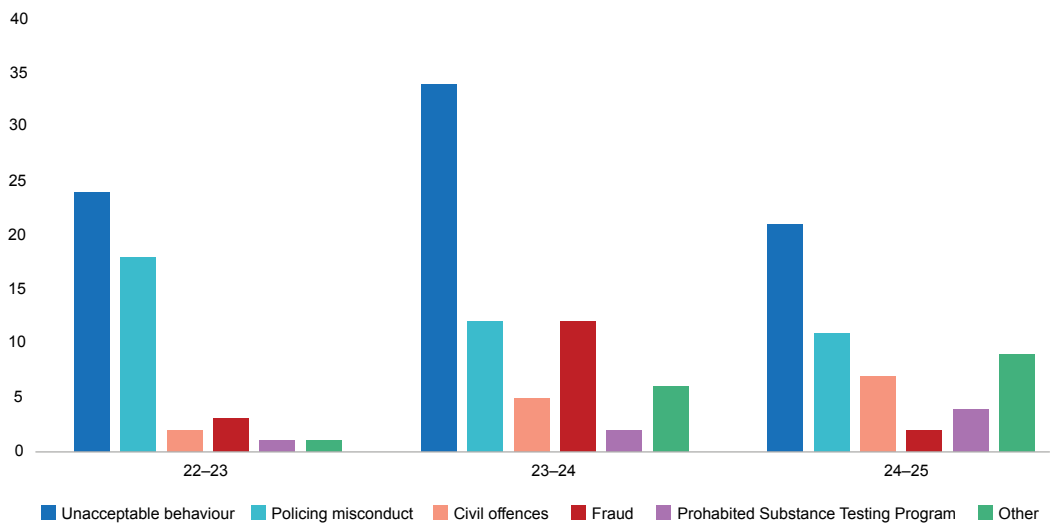
During the 2024–25 statutory reporting period the IGADF received 54 complaints about military police professional standards, which is a 23 per cent decrease from the previous year, when 71 complaints were received. Of these complaints, 76 per cent involved a Military Police enlisted member as the respondent, 15 per cent involved a Military Police Officer, and 9 per cent involved both.

The team finalised 67 matters during the 2024–25 statutory reporting period. Of the closed matters, 36 per cent identified a breach of the Military Police Code of Conduct and 2 matters found a Military Police member not fit and proper to continue serving as a member of Military Police.

The common types of complaints IGADF received about Military Police during the reporting period included unacceptable behaviour, policing misconduct, civil offences and positive Prohibited Substance Testing Program tests.

Graph 4 shows the submission categories over the previous 3 statutory reporting periods.

Graph 4: Professional Standards submission types by reporting period



Reporting observations

The number of personnel found to be not fit and proper to continue serving as a member of Military Police by the Office of the IGADF has remained consistent across the previous 3 years. The decrease in the IGADF Professional Standards caseload this statutory reporting period is due to a number of factors, including:

- improved triage and assessment procedures
- increased education amongst the Military Police community
- the empowerment of Commanding Officers to conduct appropriate unit level incident management

DIRECTORATE OF MILITARY JUSTICE PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Directorate of Military Justice Performance Review supports the IGADF in providing the CDF with an independent mechanism for audit and review of the military justice system. This function operates outside of the ordinary chain of command and includes statistical analysis, performance reviews and internal audits, conducted in accordance with section 110C of the Defence Act.

Military justice performance audit program

IGADF military justice performance audits review the health and effectiveness of the military justice system within individual ADF units. In conducting these Audits, IGADF staff comply with the requirements set out in the Australian Standard on Assurance Engagements ASAE 3500 – Performance Engagements (Revised). IGADF audit teams are comprised of a mix of permanent and Reserve members of the ADF, as well as APS employees.

Each audit team consists of 4 personnel:

- Team Leader – an ADF Officer at O6 rank or above
- Discipline Auditor – an ADF Legal Officer at legal level 3 and holding the rank of O3 to O5
- Administrative Auditor – an ADF Officer at O4 rank unless approved by the Deputy IGADF at a lower rank based on experience/skills
- Focus Group Administrator – who may be an APS employee or ADF member

During an Audit, the IGADF team audits the unit's military justice practices over the previous 12 months. They also apply professional judgement and maintain professional skepticism throughout the process. This involves developing an understanding of the unit, being satisfied with how military justice activities are administered, and gathering sufficient evidence, both documentary and verbal, to determine whether the criteria outlined in the IGADF Audit Checklists have been met.

The IGADF audit process involves several key steps, as outlined below:

1. Pre-Audit preparation – Gathering initial data from military justice systems and Defence databases, such as the Management & Analysis Reporting Solution and the Defence ERP Case Management Solution
2. Initial engagement – Making contact with the unit and providing briefings to the unit's senior leadership team
3. On-site Audit – Visiting the unit to carry out compliance checks, facilitate focus group discussions, and conduct paper-based military justice surveys
4. Exit Brief and procedural fairness – Delivering an interim finding to the Commanding Officer during the Exit Brief
5. Post-Audit reporting – Compiling all gathered information, analysing statistical data, and finalising the written Audit Report
6. Follow-up and corrective actions – The Directorate liaises with the Commanding Officer to ensure recommendations are addressed and corrective actions are implemented

During the physical audit, the IGADF audit team reviews unit records, procedures and staff competencies to assess compliance with relevant military justice law and policy requirements. These checks are intended to verify that the unit is meeting its obligations under Defence policy and legislation.

IGADF auditors also meet with ADF specialists, including Military Police, legal advisers and chaplains who, while not necessarily members of the audited unit, regularly support the Commanding Officer and unit staff. These discussions seek to understand the nature of the relationship between the specialists and the unit's command team and to gather the specialists' perspectives on the unit's military justice activities.

Focus group discussions are conducted as part of all Routine or Targeted Audits. These sessions involve unit personnel grouped by rank, and also gender where numbers allow. The questions are designed to encourage participants to share their experiences and perceptions regarding the military justice system within the unit. Key topics include members' views on how effectively the command team has implemented military justice arrangements. In addition to gathering valuable feedback, focus group discussions also serve to promote military justice values and reinforce ADF members' understanding of their rights and responsibilities within the military justice system.

The aim is to deliver a written IGADF Audit Report to the Commanding Officer of the audited unit within 3 months following the completion of an IGADF Audit. This report is also shared with the unit's chain of command, including the Vice Chief of the Defence Force, the Chief of Personnel (the officer responsible for military justice), the relevant Service Chief and, for failed units requiring a Re-audit, the CDF.

The Audit Report includes recommendations and suggestions aimed at enhancing the unit's adherence to military justice requirements and addressing any identified shortcomings. If the unit is found to have failed in complying with legal or mandatory policy obligations, the report will outline 'recommended corrective actions' for the unit to implement. Additionally, the report may offer 'suggestions' intended to improve unit practices; these are discretionary and left to the Commanding Officer's judgement.

The IGADF expects units to respond within 3 months of receiving the Audit Report, detailing how they have addressed the Audit recommendations and indicating whether any suggestions have been implemented.

Planning for implementation of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, Recommendation 54.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide recommended, and the Government agreed, that the IGADF should increase the scope, frequency, and outcomes-focus of military justice system audits. This will create an early-warning and accountability system that helps prevent harm, protect personnel, and foster integrity and trust in the military justice system.

Over the coming years, the number of required Audit activities is set to increase significantly to meet the requirements outlined by the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, driving the need for an increase in the Directorate of Military Justice Performance Review workforce growth.

The Royal Commission also recommended that the IGADF commence longitudinal studies of all Audit Reports every 2 years to determine trends, themes and issues of concern. Outcomes of these analyses will be provided to the CDF, the Minister for Defence and the Minister for Defence Personnel. Longitudinal reporting will enable early detection and addressing of emerging problems, helping Defence to shift from a reactive approach to a proactive and evidence-based system. It will also support leadership accountability and continuous improvement in military justice practices and member wellbeing. At the end of the reporting period, recruitment had commenced for a new systems and data team to be led by an O6 Legal Officer.

2024–25 audit program

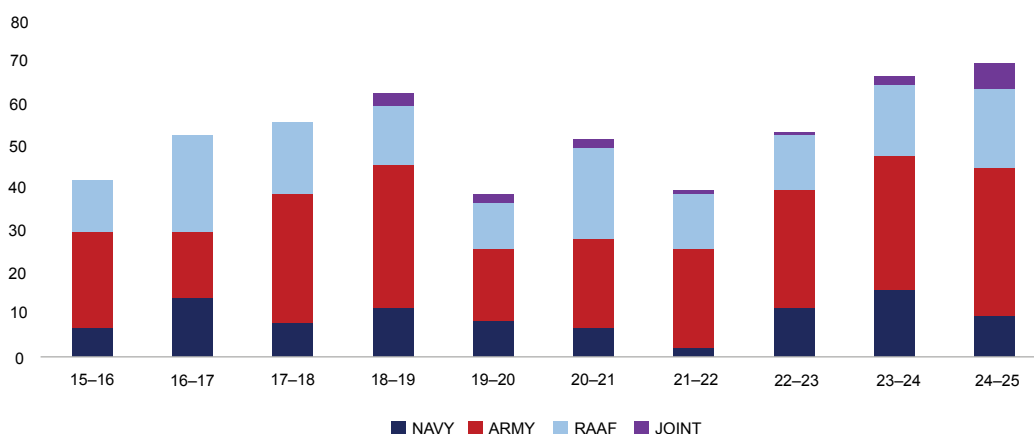
The Directorate of Military Justice Performance Review conducted a review of ADF units to determine which were suitable for auditing by the IGADF. A total of 453 units were identified to be audited over the next 5-year period in order to meet the Royal Commission's recommended increase in audit frequency. IGADF audit teams will aim to conduct audits according to the following plan:

- Major ADF units (that is, those with more than 50 personnel) will be audited every 3 years
- Initial entry training establishments will continue to be audited every 2 years
- Special Forces units will continue to be audited every 2 years
- 3 units with less than 50 personnel will be audited each year.

During the 2024–25 statutory reporting period, the Directorate of Military Justice Performance Review conducted a total of 70 Military Justice Performance Audit activities across the ADF, comprising 10 Navy units, 35 Army units, 19 Air Force units and 6 Joint units. Thirty-six Reserve ADF members were needed to support these 70 Audit activities, with permanent Directorate staff providing redundancy as required. The breakdown of Audit activities comprised of:

- 56 Routine Audits
- 1 Targeted Audit
- 5 full Re-audits
- 1 Administration-only Re-audit
- 1 Discipline-only Re-audit
- 6 focus group only activities

Graph 5: Audit activities conducted by Service since the 2015–16 statutory reporting period



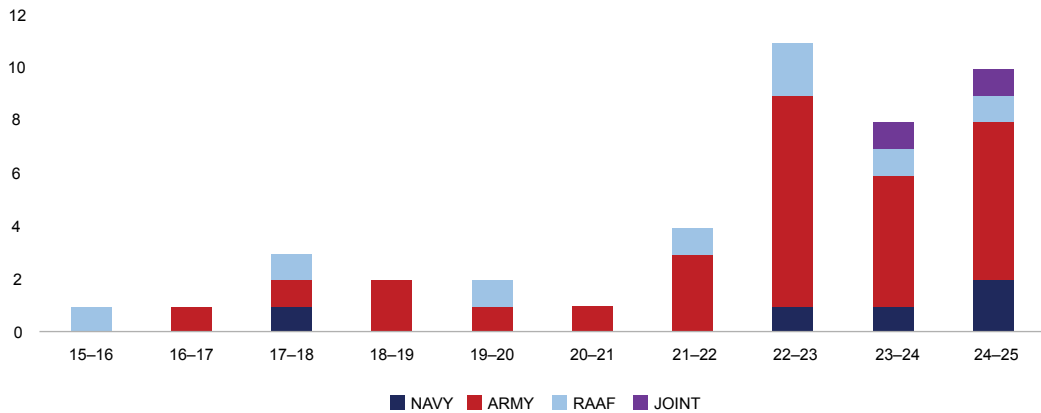
2024–25 Audit outcomes

Of the 64 Audits conducted (excluding 6 focus group activities), 10 units were found to have material deficiencies. These units are scheduled for re-audit in the 2025–26 statutory reporting period. Six of the 10 re-audits will be a ‘limited re-audit’ of either administrative or discipline military justice arrangements. Limited re-audits are conducted in circumstances where a unit has significant non-compliances with military justice law or Defence policy, but participants in focus groups reported an understanding of military justice activities and positive treatment by command.

Ten units were identified as materially deficient due to two main factors:

- a systemic breakdown in military justice procedures that compromised members’ rights; or
- poor or missing record-keeping practices, including a lack of evidence of actions and outcomes

Graph 6: Findings of material deficiencies by Service since the 2014–15 statutory reporting period



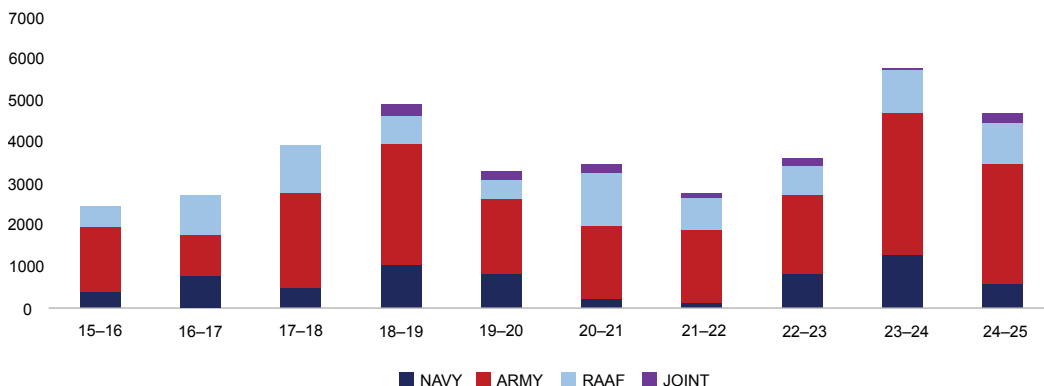
During the course of the 2024–25 Audit program, the most common audit recommendations related to:

- lack of reporting of non-routine incidents (that did not require the incident to be reported to higher headquarters)
- incomplete or inaccurate entries of discipline or administrative steps in the Defence ERP Case Management Solution
- reporting of incidents of unacceptable behaviour (including allegations)
- communication of outcomes to relevant parties involved in Fact Finding
- retention of all relevant records

2024–25 focus group outcomes

During the 2024–25 statutory reporting period, 4,702 ADF members participated in focus group discussions as part of Military Justice Performance Audits. This included 623 Navy, 2,883 Army, 964 Air Force and 232 Joint unit personnel.

Graph 7: Focus Group participation rate by service since the 2014–15 statutory reporting period



At the conclusion of each IGADF Audit focus group, participants complete an anonymous military justice survey. The survey assesses perceptions of, and confidence in, the effectiveness of the military justice system within the audited unit.

Aggregated survey data from all focus group participants provide valuable insights into ADF members' views on the broader effectiveness of the military justice system across the organisation. During 2024–25, the majority of the 4,702 focus group participants were at the Private or Junior Non-Commissioned Officer ranks.

Table 3: Depicts responses in the last 5 statutory reporting periods to key military justice survey questions

QUESTION	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Knowledge of military justice system					
received adequate discipline training to allow the member to discharge their DFDA responsibilities	53 %	48 %	47 %	54 %	55 %
understood the concept of procedural fairness	89 %	84 %	85 %	90 %	90 %
aware of complaint avenues	72 %	67 %	64 %	73 %	69 %
knew where to obtain advice or information on unacceptable behaviour	88 %	83 %	84 %	88 %	86 %
Military justice system effectiveness					
the DFDA is an effective tool for the maintenance of discipline	84 %	78 %	76 %	80 %	77 %
military justice system provided sufficient feedback to complainants and respondents	46 %	40 %	41 %	50 %	43 %
alcohol testing program is effective	62 %	63 %	56 %	58 %	59 %
drug testing is effective	68 %	70 %	62 %	62 %	62 %

QUESTION	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Timeliness					
processes involved in investigating offences take too long	26 %	33 %	35 %	24 %	27 %
complexity of the DFDA discourages people from laying charges	34 %	43 %	39 %	34 %	34 %
adverse administrative action procedures take too long	26 %	27 %	29 %	23 %	23 %
Fair treatment					
discipline process is fairly and consistently applied	75 %	71 %	71 %	79 %	75 %
unit would treat them fairly and impartially if they were the subject of an administrative inquiry	79 %	70 %	71 %	82 %	81 %
unit maintained a balance between the rights of complainants and the rights of respondents	62 %	57 %	60 %	71 %	65 %
all ranks would be treated equally under the military justice system	69 %	59 %	63 %	74 %	73 %
all genders would be treated equitably under the military justice system	78 %	70 %	74 %	80 %	81 %
Confidence in command chain					
confidence in their chain of command to resolve complaints	77 %	72 %	73 %	79 %	76 %
complaints made to their chain of command were dealt with fairly, promptly and impartially	65 %	62 %	63 %	72 %	64 %
appropriate action would be taken if they reported an incident of unacceptable behaviour	82 %	82 %	82 %	86 %	84 %
appropriate action would be taken against an incident or complaint of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault	91 %	90 %	89 %	93 %	93 %
Military justice culture / morale					
had experienced or witnessed unacceptable behaviour at their unit	25 %	25 %	31 %	20 %	25 %
overall workload was excessive	30 %	31 %	37 %	28 %	35 %
morale was good	64 %	63 %	63 %	74 %	70 %

DIRECTORATE OF SELECT INCIDENT REVIEW

The Directorate of Select Incident Review inquires into the deaths of all ADF members, including reservists, when the circumstances suggest the death occurred as a result of, or during, service with the Defence Force. The Office of the IGADF does not have the authority to conduct own-initiative inquiries into the death of a former ADF member. Inquiry reports are provided to the CDF in accordance with section 27(4) of the *Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force Regulation 2016* (Cth).

In each case, the Directorate of Select Incident Review examines the circumstances of the death to determine if there is any connection to Defence service. The Directorate supports the IGADF by developing recommendations aimed at preventing or reducing the risk of death or serious injury. Relevant policies, procedures and practices applicable in each individual death inquiry are identified and examined, which strengthen ADF systems and processes.

The Office of the IGADF engages with those affected by a death using trauma-informed practices and a compassionate approach. The IGADF places a strong emphasis on family and witness liaison, recognising that families, colleagues, and friends of the deceased person often provide critical insights that support inquiries. Enhanced communication with individuals affected by ADF deaths, and improved engagement with families, has enabled more meaningful contributions improving the overall inquiry process.

Service deaths reported

IGADF received 42 death notifications during the 2024–25 statutory reporting period. These notifications related to:

- 23 health related deaths
- 13 suspected suicides
- 2 undetermined – cause of death was still to be confirmed at the conclusion of the statutory reporting period
- 3 motor vehicle collisions
- 1 killed in Ukraine (not related to ADF service)

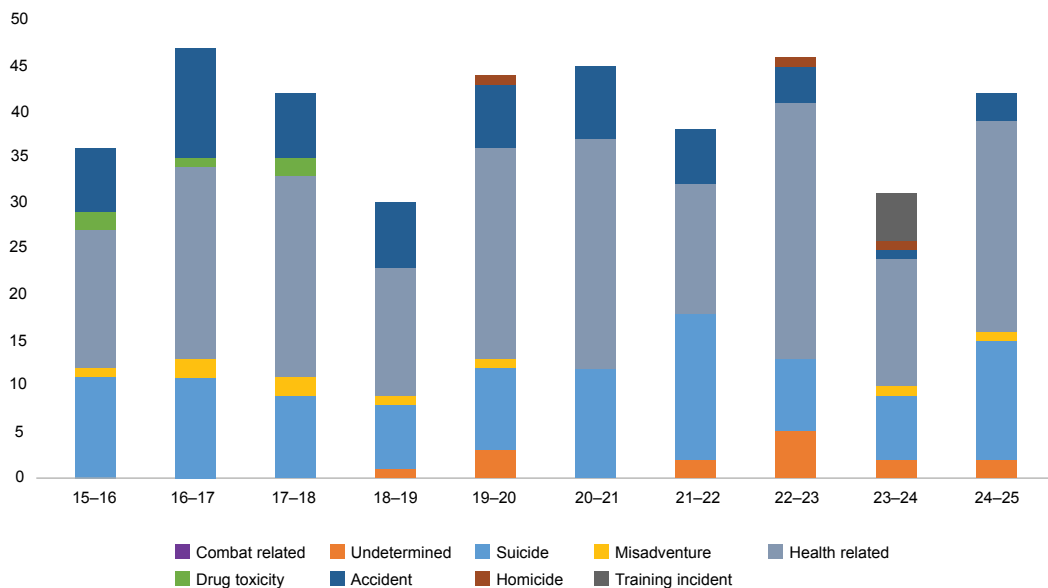
The number of deaths reported to the IGADF increased from 31 death notifications in the last statutory reporting period. During the previous reporting period, there were 7 deaths by suicide, which has almost doubled this reporting period, with 13 suspected suicides notified to the IGADF. There were 10 additional health-related deaths reported when compared to the last statutory reporting period.

When the cause of death is undetermined or the circumstances suggest a possible suicide, the case is inquired into as a suspected suicide.

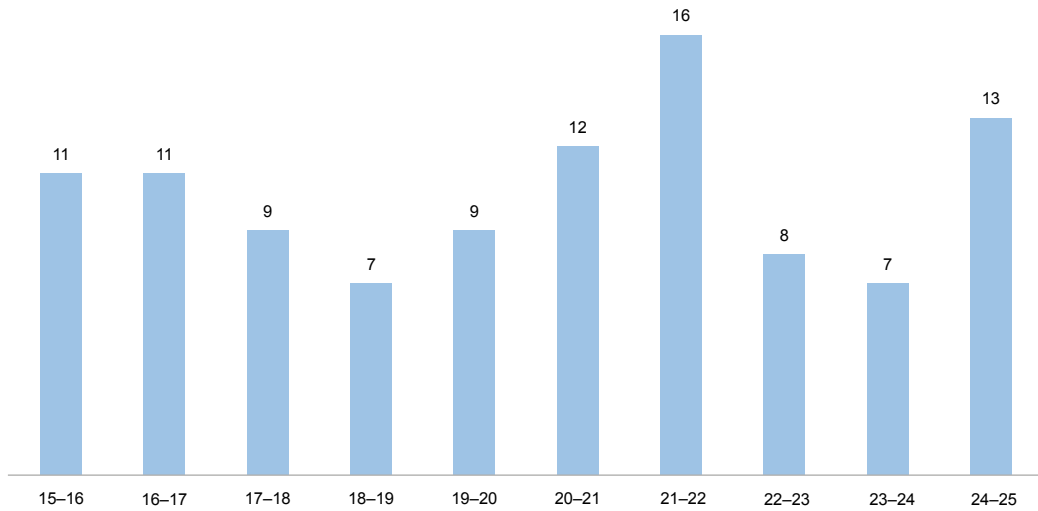
The Office of the IGADF attempts to obtain as much information from government and medical records as possible. This supports the inquiry process and promotes a trauma-informed approach by reducing the number of witnesses who need to be engaged, and limiting the need to discuss traumatic incidents. Legislative restrictions have prevented the IGADF from obtaining critical information in some matters this statutory reporting period, including information such as the cause of death or essential information relating to the circumstances of death. It has also been necessary to re-interview witnesses who have already provided accounts to other agencies because the IGADF has not been able to obtain copies of the records.

The Directorate of Select Incident Review continues to request legal support from Defence Counsel Services who appoint a lawyer to independently represent the interests of the deceased person. This occurs in inquiries where the death is by suicide or occurred during a Defence activity, such as a training incident. A legal representative is also requested in matters where adverse findings or commentary about the conduct of a deceased person is identified.

Graph 8: Cause of death (for ongoing, incomplete inquiries, a preliminary provisional finding about cause of death is shown)



Graph 9: Suicide by statutory reporting period (in the case of ongoing, incomplete inquiries, this graph shows a preliminary provisional finding)

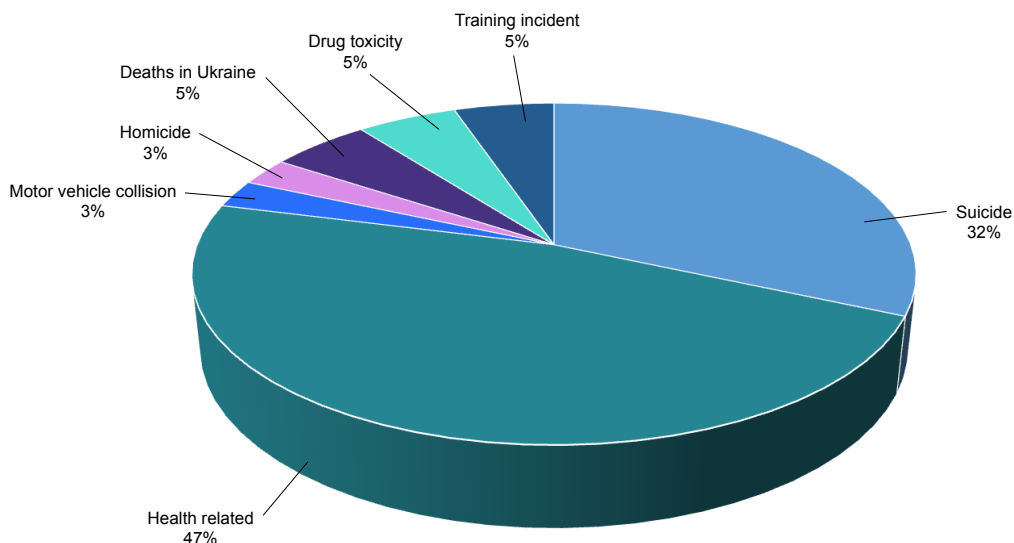


Service death inquiries:

The Directorate of Select Incident Review completed 38 inquiries during the 2024–25 statutory reporting period:

- 18 health related
- 12 suicides
- 1 motor vehicle collision
- 1 homicide (family and domestic violence related)
- 2 deaths in Ukraine (Not on ADF duty)
- 2 drug toxicity (non-suicide)
- 1 training incidents (2 deaths)

Graph 10: Completed service death inquiries during the reporting period



Performance

The performance of the Directorate remained steady this reporting period, with the overall average time to complete an inquiry reducing slightly from 320 days to 319 days. The duration of suicide inquiries increased from 431 days to 494 days. This increase is due to the completion of 4 complex long-running inquiries. Excluding these matters, the average inquiry timeframe was 378 days. Increases to inquiry durations are also a result of changes to the consultation process and the IGADF's commitment to a trauma-informed approach to these matters, including providing family and loved ones longer periods of time to make a submission to an inquiry.

The IGADF recognises that certain times of year can affect grieving families and loved ones more than others. Careful consideration is given to avoid inquiry-related activities around anniversaries, birthdays, ANZAC Day and from mid-December to mid-January. This trauma-informed approach will also extend the duration of an inquiry.

Across the reporting period the Directorate provided significant support to external processes, which consequently placed pressure, at times, on the timeliness of its responses to matters. This support included important assistance to progress the implementation of several recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide and support the work of the Implementation Taskforce.

Table 4: Average number of days to complete a DSIR inquiry by reporting period

Cause of death	2023–24		2024–25	
Suicide	431	Deaths by suicide	494	Deaths by suicide
Health	230	Health related deaths	218	Health related deaths
Training Incidents	0	No training incident deaths finalised in the reporting period	567	Truck rollover (2 deaths)
Other	217	Inclusive of: deaths by motor vehicle collision, fall from height, drug overdose, civilian plane crash, homicide.	187	Inclusive of: deaths by motor vehicle collision, drug overdose, homicide, and deaths in Ukraine.
Overall Average	320		319	

DIRECTORATE OF MILITARY REDRESS AND REVIEW

The IGADF is responsible for the management and oversight of the redress of grievance complaint process. Under Part 7 of the *Defence Regulation 2016* (Cth), an ADF member may complain to their Commanding Officer about an adverse decision, act or omission that relates to their service. If the member remains dissatisfied following the Commanding Officer’s resolution of the matter, the IGADF then conducts an independent merits review of the member’s complaint, and may make recommendations to the ADF on actions to redress any incorrect or unfair decision, act or omission.

The Directorate of Military Redress and Review is made up of 2 teams. The Desk Officer team consists of dedicated full-time ADF liaison officers for each Service, who provide procedural information and support to members, Commanding Officers and unit administrative personnel during the initial consideration of a redress of grievance complaint. The Case Officer team consists of a combination of APS and ADF Reserve case officers and senior ADF Reserve decision-makers, who conduct and finalise the Office of the IGADF’s substantive consideration of complaints.

Along with providing procedural support to Commanding Officers who have received a redress of grievance complaint, the Office of the IGADF continues to proactively deliver presentations to personnel in ADF roles that handle members’ grievances. This includes Legal Officers and unit personnel responsible for personnel operations and management.

During the 2024–25 statutory reporting period, the IGADF continued to engage with Defence, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and other stakeholders on the planning and implementation of recommendations related to the redress of grievance scheme from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

The Royal Commission's Recommendation 52(c), to which the Government agreed, was that members who have complained about the termination of their service be given "the opportunity to provide any further information or submissions prior to concluding their consideration of the complaint, in person, if practicable to do so, when the proposed outcome will not be favourable to the member". Implementation of this recommendation commenced during the reporting period.

To ensure a trauma-informed approach, members are offered choice in how they receive the draft outcome, whether through an in-person or phone briefing, or via email, with appropriate wellbeing supports in place. They are also given as much time as reasonably needed to provide any final comments or information. While this approach has extended the average timeframe for resolving grievances, it reflects the Office's commitment to prioritising member wellbeing and respectful engagement.

There has been a trend of reducing complaint numbers over a number of years, indicative of members reaching resolution of a greater proportion of matters through their chain of command without need for submitting a formal redress of grievance complaint. However, redress of grievance complaints submitted to the IGADF tend to be increasingly complex in nature, which also increases the time required to thoroughly and independently consider and finalise complaints.

The time taken to consider a complaint is compounded by the part time nature of the Directorate of Military Redress and Review's predominantly Reserve case officer workforce. Complaints continue to be finalised at a similar rate as in previous reporting periods, but the individual complaints are taking longer to resolve. This is partly due to the complexity and scope of grievance matters received. Additional contracted case officers have been engaged as an interim measure while a strategy to increase permanent ADF and APS positions is developed as part of a broader IGADF workforce plan.

Redress of grievance complaints received

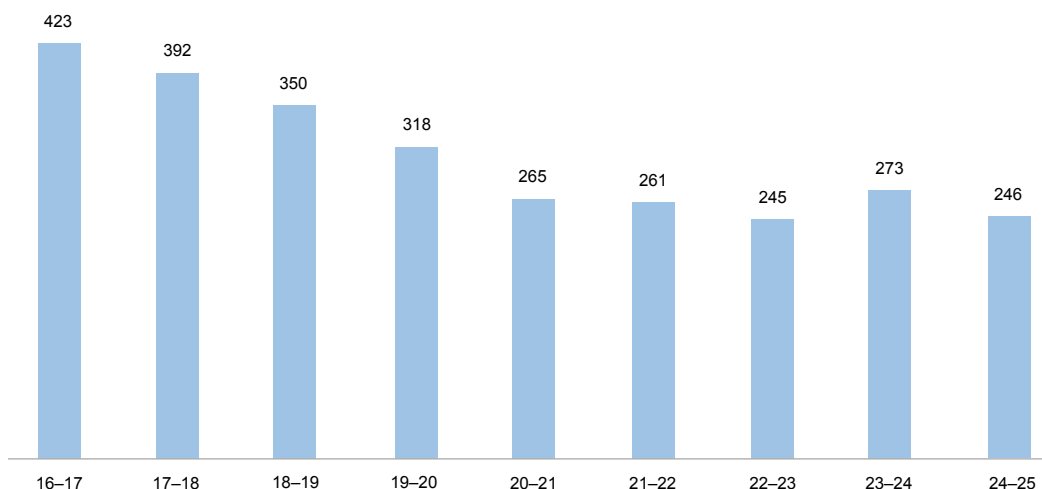
At the start of the statutory reporting period on 1 July 2024, 142 complaints were open and being considered under Part 7 of the *Defence Regulation 2016* (Cth).

ADF members submitted 246 new complaints during the 2024–25 reporting period, which aligns with numbers received in 2022–23. The increase in complaint numbers during the last reporting period, 2023–24, likely reflected increased focus on the redress of grievance scheme during the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

The number of complaints received in the 2024–25 period by service was:

- Navy personnel submitted 61 complaints, compared to 69 in 2023–24
- Army personnel submitted 109 complaints, compared to 129 in 2023–24
- Air Force personnel submitted 76 complaints, compared to 75 in 2023–24

Graph 11: ROGs received by year under the current Defence Regulation 2016 (since 2016–17)



Categories of complaints received

The types of complaints received in the 2024–25 reporting period were related to:

- career – 33%
- entitlements – 26%
- termination of service – 18%
- unacceptable behaviour complaint outcomes – 12%
- financial, medical, security, process, recruitment/enlistment and privacy complaints – 11%

Time taken for referral of complaints to IGADF

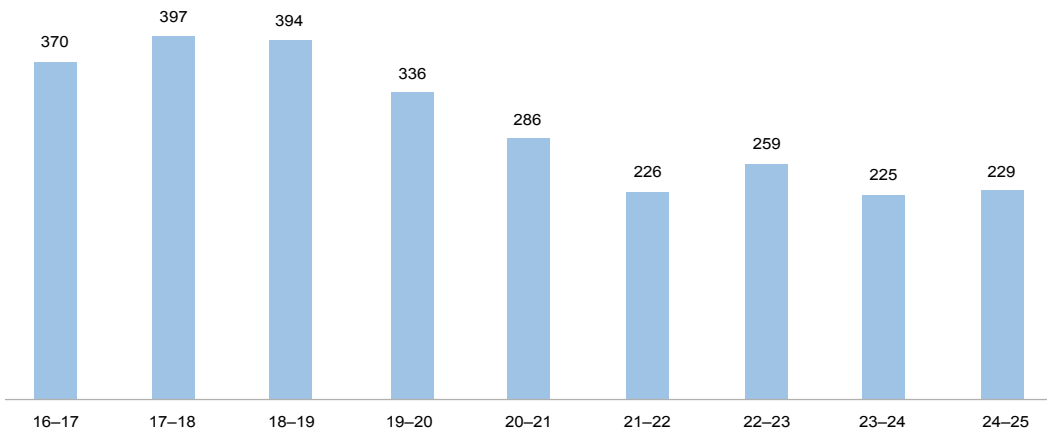
There is a regulatory requirement for Commanding Officers to notify the IGADF of a complaint by referring it within 14 days of the Commanding Officer receiving the complaint. In the 2024–25 reporting period, 75% of complaints were referred to the IGADF within 14 days of the complaint being received, down from 79% in 2023–24.

Redress of grievance complaints finalised

During the 2024–25 reporting period, 229 complaints were finalised, a slight increase on the previous year. The number of complaints closed in the 2024–25 period by service was:

- 44 Navy complaints were finalised, compared to 54 in 2023–24
- 107 Army complaints were finalised, compared to 112 in 2023–24
- 78 Air Force complaints were finalised, compared to 59 in 2023–24

Graph 12: ROGs closed by year under the current Defence Regulation 2016 (since 2016–17)



Complaint outcomes

Decisions related to the 229 complaints finalised during the 2024–25 reporting period:

- 50 were partially or fully substantiated – 22%
- 76 were unsubstantiated – 33%
- 61 were withdrawn (33 due to the matter being resolved, 18 to pursue other complaint avenues, 10 for other reasons) – 27%
- 21 were not reviewable (either out of jurisdiction or out of time) – 9%
- 21 were referred by IGADF for action under an alternative complaints mechanism – 9%

Time taken to resolve grievances

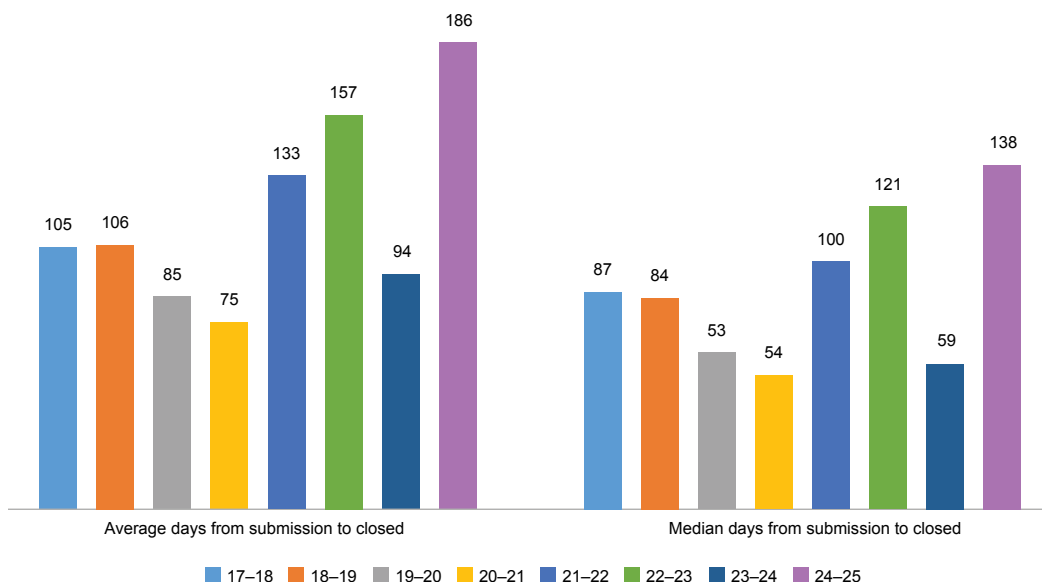
In the 2024–25 reporting period, the average time taken from the submission of a complaint to its closure was 186 days, a significant increase from 94 days in the 2023–24 reporting period, with a median time of 138 days (increased from 59 days).

Commanding Officers' initial consideration of complaints took an average of 66 days, while subsequent Directorate of Military Redress and Review merits review took an average of 120 days.

The Office has contributed to the very important work of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Taskforce. At the same time, the Directorate's responsiveness was challenged by ongoing, cumulative demands, affecting the timeliness of key functions while continuing to provide essential assistance to these external processes.

The increase in time taken to resolve grievances reflects the introduction of additional trauma-informed approaches to complaint handling, including as recommended by the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. This has been compounded by the increasing complexity of matters subject to complaint – simpler matters are usually resolved less formally through the chain of command, without the need for an application for redress of grievance.

Graph 13: Average and median times taken to resolve grievances since 2017–18



GENERAL COUNSEL

During this reporting period, the IGADF implemented changes to both the General Counsel’s title and reporting lines. The General Counsel, which was previously the Legal Directorate, now reports directly to the IGADF.

These changes reflect the evolving nature of the IGADF’s in-house counsel role and reinforces the independence of the Office of the IGADF.

The General Counsel continues to provide the IGADF and his senior staff with a legal and legal policy advisory function, to assist those officers fulfil the IGADF’s statutory powers and functions.

Support to the implementation of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

Throughout the reporting period, the General Counsel team continued to assist the IGADF in supporting the Government's implementation of agreed recommendations from the final report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, and in particular those recommendations which relate to the IGADF and his legislative functions. General Counsel has worked closely with the IGADF, Defence and other stakeholders to ensure a coordinated approach.

General Counsel supported the IGADF in making a submission to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee on the Review of Schedule 9 of the *Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2025* (Cth), which establishes the Defence and Veterans' Services Commissioner.

Legislative reform

During the reporting period, General Counsel coordinated with the Attorney-General's Department and Defence on the drafting of the *Public Interest Disclosure Rules 2025* (Cth), which provides that the IGADF is a prescribed authority for the purposes of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013* (Cth) (the PID Act). This important regulatory update appropriately reflects the independence of the IGADF, whose office is now an agency distinct from Defence for the purposes of the PID Act.

Litigation

General Counsel continued to manage the IGADF's interests in litigation in conjunction with the Australian Government Solicitor.

One key interest is ensuring appropriate protection of IGADF inquiry-related information. Of note in this regard were the appeals to the Full Court of the Federal Court of Australia in *Roberts-Smith v Fairfax Media Publications Pty Limited* (Appeal) [2025] FCAFC 67, to the ACT Supreme Court of Appeal in *McBride v The King* [2025] ACTCA 16, and the criminal proceedings relating to a former SAS soldier.

INFORMATION TRACKING SYSTEMS

During the reporting period, a staggered implementation of the new Defence Enterprise Resource Planning Case Management Solution (DECMS) continued. This modern platform is designed to enhance case management capabilities and streamline oversight processes.

Legacy information tracking systems

While DECMS is being progressively adopted, 2 legacy information tracking systems remain in use for historical data purposes. These systems have played a vital role in supporting oversight of the military justice system by providing essential data on its condition and effectiveness:

- **ADF Administrative Inquiries Tracking System (ADFAITS):**
A tool historically used to monitor administrative inquiries across the ADF. ADFAITS is now used solely as an archive repository. Once all relevant data has been successfully migrated to DECMS, ADFAITS will be fully decommissioned.
- **Defence One – Conduct Reporting and Tracking System (CRTS):**
A system used to track and report conduct-related matters within Defence. CRTS has now been absorbed into the Personnel Management Key Solution (PMKeyS), which continues to serve as the authoritative source of personnel data.

The integration of CRTS into PMKeyS, alongside the transition to DECMS, enables a cohesive and reliable personnel and conduct oversight framework by ensuring data consistency and supporting effective analysis across systems.

Enterprise Resource Planning project

The Enterprise Resource Planning project is a major Defence transformation initiative aimed at standardising, simplifying, and aligning processes across the organisation. It represents a significant step forward in modernising the way Defence conducts its business.

As highlighted in previous IGADF annual reports, the IGADF has long advocated for an enterprise-wide case management system. A solution capable of supporting a longitudinal management approach to incidents, complaints, and cases is essential for:

- establishing a single source of truth for Defence
- enabling accurate tracking and reporting of incidents
- supporting trend data analysis to inform oversight and reform

The IGADF is a key stakeholder and end user of DECMS, which now serves as the central platform for managing military justice-related cases and inquiries.

Defence (Inquiry) Regulations 2018

Regulation 73 of the *Defence (Inquiry) Regulation 2018* (Cth) requires the CDF to report on the operation of administrative inquiries conducted in Defence during each statutory reporting period. ADF appointing officers initiated 17 administrative inquiries (1 Navy, 13 Army and 3 Air Force) during the 2024–25 reporting period.

OUTREACH

Military justice meetings, seminars and forums

During the reporting period, the Inspector-General and OIGADF staff had a number of opportunities to present on IGADF's roles and functions to different audiences. These included:

- procedural fairness workshops for the Defence Senior Leadership Group
- presentation to Public Interest Disclosure Community of Practice
- presentation to Defence Integrity Conference
- presentation to 14th Annual National Public Sector Fraud and Corruption Congress
- presentation to LTM3 Advanced Military Administrative Law Course
- presentation to LTM3 Advanced Military Discipline Law Course
- presentation to ACT Reserve Legal Panel
- presentation to South Australian Reserve Legal Panel
- presentation to 14th Annual National Public Sector Fraud and Corruption Congress
- presentation to Service Headquarters Legal Officers
- Commonwealth Inspectors-General meetings
- Joint Military Police Governance Board
- Military Justice Steering Group
- Military Justice Legal Forum
- presentations to Capstone leadership programs

IGADF outreach program

Throughout this statutory reporting period, the IGADF successfully continued its national outreach program with strong momentum. Engagement sessions were conducted in capital cities and regional centres, reflecting the IGADF's commitment to broad and inclusive engagement. The outreach program remains a valuable platform for promoting awareness of the IGADF's statutory role and responsibilities. It also serves as a valuable forum for collaboration with counterpart agencies on shared areas of interest.

Engagement activities included both community-based and Defence-focused sessions. IGADF staff notably participated in a number of ADF transition seminars during the reporting period, providing ADF members and their families with insights into the IGADF's independent oversight functions.

Public interest in the IGADF's work continues to grow. Ongoing collaboration with the Defence community and external organisations has strengthened relationships and enhanced transparency around the IGADF's inquiry processes and complaint management practices.

CONCLUSION

The reporting period was characterised by unprecedented growth in the IGADF's operational tempo, with submissions and referrals for inquiry or investigation more than doubling the previous record and continuing a five-year upward trend. This sustained increase reflects both the growing complexity of military justice matters and heightened confidence in the IGADF's independent and impartial role. ADF members demonstrated greater awareness of their rights and a stronger willingness to engage with complaint-handling processes, reinforcing the integrity and accessibility of the military justice system.

Two major inquiries dominated the IGADF's work: the Inquiry into potential weaponisation of the military justice system, launched in August 2024 following the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, and the Inquiry into the deaths of four soldiers in the MRH-90 Taipan helicopter crash during Exercise TALISMAN SABRE. Both inquiries attracted significant public engagement and remain ongoing. The IGADF also continued its critical support to the Office of the Special Investigator in relation to alleged war crimes, underscoring its commitment to accountability and transparency.

The Royal Commission's final report delivered 122 recommendations, 13 of which directly affect the IGADF. These reforms aim to strengthen independence, capability, and oversight through measures such as enhanced leadership, expanded audit programs, and trauma-informed practices. During the reporting period, the IGADF began implementing agreed recommendations that do not require legislative change, including planning to double annual military justice performance audits. The Office also assumed new responsibilities under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013* (Cth), further reinforcing protections for whistleblowers and integrity across the sector.

The Office of the IGADF has provided significant support this reporting period to the ANAO's ongoing audit into the administration of investigations in Defence which has helped advance our objectives of accountability and effective oversight of the military justice system.

Meeting these expanding responsibilities required targeted recruitment, organisational redesign, and specialist training in areas such as inquiry conduct, trauma-informed practices, and investigations. While competing priorities affected timeliness in some processes, the IGADF remained focused on its core statutory functions: independent oversight of the ADF's military justice system, monitoring military police standards, conducting inquiries into service deaths, and managing complaints under the Redress of Grievance scheme. The reporting period highlights the IGADF's continuing role in safeguarding fairness, trust, and accountability not only in its processes but also in the military justice system.



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