Australian Government

Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026 – 2028

FOREWORD FROM THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL



This third edition of the Office of the Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force (IGADF) Strategic Plan reflects the continued evolution of the Office of the IGADF as an independent integrity, oversight and inquiry body supporting Defence and the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

Since the release of our previous Strategic Plan, the Office of the IGADF has continued to operate in an increasingly complicated and demanding environment. The volume and complexity of submissions, complaints, reviews and inquiries have grown significantly, reflecting both increased awareness of the IGADF's role and the expanding expectations placed on independent oversight bodies. At the same time, we have continued to undertake highly complex and sensitive matters requiring specialised legal, military and operational expertise.

As the Office of the IGADF enters its twenty-third year of operation, we remain focused on our enduring purpose while positioning ourselves to meet future challenges, expectations and opportunities. Established in 2003 to promote trust, accountability and fairness within the military justice system, we remain committed to ensuring ADF members have access to impartial and independent oversight. Preserving confidence in the integrity of Defence's military justice framework continues to be central to our role and purpose.

Over time, our responsibilities have expanded to include oversight of the statutory Redress of Grievance scheme, review of Military Police professional standards matters and inquiries into the deaths of ADF members. These functions reinforce our contribution to fairness, accountability and continuous improvement across Defence. Through our work, we strengthen military justice outcomes, support good governance and contribute to ADF operational effectiveness, while ensuring individuals are treated with respect, procedural fairness and dignity.

The delivery of these outcomes is underpinned by the values that guide our people and shape our culture. These shared values provide the foundation for our decision-making, our engagement with stakeholders and our commitment to excellence.

This Strategic Plan sets out our vision for the years ahead. It provides a clear direction as we continue to adapt to a changing environment, strengthen our capabilities and enhance our services. Supported by contemporary systems, robust governance and a highly skilled workforce, the Plan will guide our efforts to maintain trust, promote integrity and deliver independent oversight that contributes to a fair, accountable and effective Defence organisation.

JM Gaynor CSC
Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force

OFFICE OF THE IGADF VISION, MISSION AND VALUES



Vision: Trusted to independently provide fair, transparent oversight that strengthens military justice for Defence members and their families.



Mission: Deliver impartial, fair and independent findings and recommendations on military justice issues and critical incidents, providing transparent oversight that builds trust across Defence.



Values: Respect, Integrity, Independence, Impartiality, Fairness, Compassion, Empathy, Accountability and Transparency.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026 - 2028 SUMMARY

The Office of the IGADF is committed to being a trusted and respected oversight body that promotes fairness and integrity across Defence. Our mission and values guide our work, strengthen stakeholder confidence, and support the achievement of this vision.

Our values underpin our culture and guide the way we work. We demonstrate respect for ourselves, our colleagues and all those with who we engage, while upholding the highest standards of integrity. We safeguard the independence of the IGADF and approach our work and decision-making with fairness, objectivity and impartiality.

We have identified eight strategic objectives to achieve our vision.

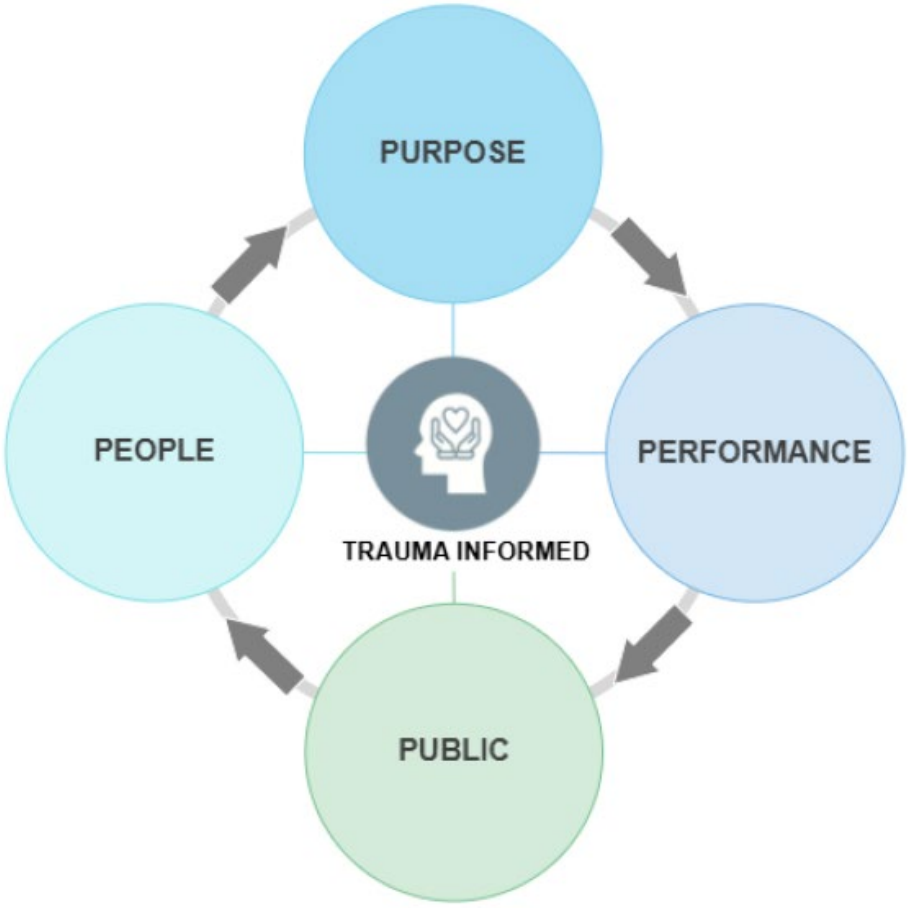
- Promote fairness and confidence in the military justice system
- Ensure that outcomes are fair, impartial, accurate and timely
- Collaborate with Defence to ensure proper complaint management
- Maintain trust and respect in IGADF through high quality work
- Enhance workforce capability, skills and trauma informed practice
- Strengthen relationships with ADF members, families and stakeholders
- Improve internal coordination to increase efficiency and reduce duplication
- Provide assurance and follow-up on IGADF recommendations to support continuous improvement and systemic learning within Defence.



Achieving our vision requires a clear focus on the outcomes that matter most. This Strategic Plan outlines the strategic objectives, strategies and performance measures that will guide our efforts and enable us to measure our success.

The Plan is structured around five strategic themes:

- **Purpose:** Delivering independent oversight, inquiry and assurance.
- **Performance:** Continuously improving the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of our work.
- **Stakeholders:** Building trust and confidence among those we serve.
- **People:** Developing and supporting a skilled, engaged and high-performing workforce.
- **Reporting:** The IGADF reports on their progress annually via an Annual Report to Parliament.



STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

Our purpose

The Office of the IGADF is an independent integrity, oversight and inquiry body that strengthens confidence in Defence through impartial reviews, investigations and assurance activities. Operating separately from the military chain of command and departmental management, it promotes accountability, procedural fairness and continuous improvement across the military justice system.

Through its statutory functions, the Office of the IGADF provides independent scrutiny and assurance, fostering transparency, integrity and trust while supporting a professional and accountable Defence organisation.

Broadly, the IGADF functions are to:

- investigate or inquire into matters concerning the military justice system
- 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
- investigate or inquire into justice matters including the professional conduct of Military Police
- advise on matters concerning the military justice system, including making recommendations for improvement
- independently consider complaints by ADF members
- review complaints submitted by ADF members under the statutory Redress of Grievance complaint system
- 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
- if directed by the Minister or the CDF, investigate or inquire into a matter
- promote military justice values across the ADF
- do anything incidental or conducive to the performance of the IGADF's other functions

Our environment

The military justice system plays a critical role in supporting ADF operational capability by balancing the need to maintain good order and discipline with the protection of the rights of ADF members.

The system encompasses a range of mechanisms that support discipline, administrative decision-making and accountability across the ADF, ensuring command authority is exercised fairly and in accordance with the law.

The ADF military justice system comprises four key components:

1. Disciplinary investigations, prosecutions and proceedings under the *Defence Force Discipline Act 1982*, including disciplinary infringements, commanding officer and superior summary proceedings, and Court Martial and Defence Force Magistrate proceedings, together with associated review and appeal mechanisms. These arrangements form part of the framework for maintaining service discipline.

2. Adverse administrative action, including administrative sanctions such as censures and formal warnings and involuntary separation from the ADF, taken to maintain appropriate standards within the ADF and undertaken in accordance with applicable legislation, policy and procedural fairness.

3. The conduct of administrative inquiries, including Fact Finding and Inquiry Officer Inquiries, to establish the facts of incidents, events or issues and inform appropriate remedial or preventative action. Findings may be considered in determining whether disciplinary or criminal action is warranted.

4. Review and complaint mechanisms, including the statutory Redress of Grievance system available to ADF members, providing avenues to raise concerns, seek redress and challenge decisions or actions, and supporting the identification and resolution of individual and systemic issues.

Within this environment, the Office of the IGADF provides independent oversight, review and assurance to promote integrity, transparency, accountability and continuous improvement across the military justice system.

Confidence in the military justice system depends on effective, independent oversight and assurance. As the operating environment becomes increasingly complex, the Office of the IGADF continues to respond to growing demand, more complex complaints and review matters, and highly sensitive inquiries requiring specialised expertise. Maintaining the capability and capacity to meet these challenges will be critical to supporting a fair, effective and trusted military justice system.

Our strategic response

Over the life of this Strategic Plan, the Office of the IGADF will continue to strengthen and modernise its systems, processes and capabilities to meet emerging challenges and deliver on its statutory responsibilities.

We will invest in contemporary data, systems and analytical capabilities to enhance our ability to identify emerging risks, inform decision-making and support efficient, evidence-based oversight. The implementation of reforms arising from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, together with ongoing improvements to our inquiry, review and assurance functions, will continue to shape the way we deliver our services. By

strengthening our workforce, modernising our business systems and adopting innovative approaches to oversight and assurance, we will be better positioned to respond to increasing demand while maintaining the independence, quality and timeliness of our services and preserving confidence in the military justice system.

Approach to risk

The Office of the IGADF operates in a complex and evolving environment, requiring a proactive and adaptable approach to risk management. As Defence and the ADF continue to introduce new capabilities, operating models and ways of working, the Office must maintain its ability to provide effective, relevant and responsive oversight.

The nature of the matters received by the Office of the IGADF is also changing. Submissions, complaints and inquiries are becoming increasingly complex, requiring agile decision-making, specialised expertise and robust governance arrangements to ensure risks are managed effectively.

We face a range of external risks, including legal and judicial challenges to decisions and processes, adverse findings by external review bodies, diminished confidence in the military justice system, and reputational risks arising from public scrutiny of our work. The effectiveness of the military justice system may also be affected where recommendations are not implemented, potentially impacting confidence in oversight and accountability mechanisms.

Like many public sector organisations, we must also manage internal risks relating to workforce capability, recruitment and retention, financial sustainability, information management and organisational resilience. Ongoing vigilance is essential to ensure these risks do not adversely affect our ability to deliver our statutory functions.

Over the life of this Strategic Plan, we will continue to strengthen our governance, systems, data and risk management capabilities to support informed decision-making and organisational resilience. Through a more integrated approach to identifying, assessing, monitoring and treating risk, we will enhance our ability to anticipate emerging challenges and deliver our functions effectively.

While risk cannot be eliminated, a proactive approach to risk management enables us to anticipate emerging challenges, reduce the likelihood and impact of adverse events, and maintain the confidence of Defence and the ADF in the integrity and effectiveness of our work.

Capabilities

Delivering our Strategic Plan requires a strong and sustainable capability base that enables the Office of the IGADF to perform its statutory functions effectively, efficiently and independently. Our capabilities must support the delivery of high-quality oversight, inquiry and assurance activities while allowing us to remain agile and responsive in a changing operating environment.

Achieving our strategic objectives depends on making informed decisions about the allocation of resources, investment and priorities. Through ongoing capability planning, the Office of the IGADF will assess its current strengths, identify emerging capability requirements and prioritise future investment in people, systems, processes and technology, including enhanced data and analytical capabilities.

By understanding the capabilities needed to meet current and future demands, and directing resources where they will have the greatest impact, we will strengthen organisational resilience, improve service delivery and enhance our ability to achieve our strategic objectives.

Our workforce

Our people are central to the Office of the IGADF's ability to deliver independent oversight, inquiry and assurance functions. A high-performing workforce is enabled by strong, visible and accountable leadership that fosters integrity, professionalism and ethical conduct, and creates a culture where people feel valued, supported and empowered to perform at their best.

We are committed to maintaining a safe, inclusive and respectful workplace that supports workforce wellbeing and resilience. Through education, awareness, trauma-informed practices and targeted support strategies, we seek to minimise the risk of harm to our people and those with whom we engage.

The Office of the IGADF's strength lies in its diverse and integrated workforce, drawing on the expertise of Australian Public Service employees, permanent ADF members, experienced ADF Reservists and specialised professional service providers. To meet current and future demands, we will continue to build a workforce that is professional, adaptable, capable and equipped to deliver high-quality outcomes.

Through workforce planning, professional development, leadership growth and strong governance, we will ensure our people have the skills, knowledge, structures and support needed to undertake complex investigative, inquiry, audit and engagement activities and deliver on the Office of the IGADF's strategic objectives.

Governance and review

Effective governance is fundamental to the Office of the IGADF's ability to deliver its independent oversight, inquiry and assurance functions with integrity, accountability and transparency. Strong governance supports informed decision-making, effective risk management and the responsible stewardship of public resources, while reinforcing confidence in our work.

This Strategic Plan provides the framework for setting priorities, monitoring performance and guiding organisational effort. We will regularly assess our progress, review our operating environment and adapt our approach where necessary to ensure we remain responsive, effective and focused on achieving our vision, mission and strategic objectives.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Strategic Objective 1 – Promote fairness and confidence in the military justice system

Outcome Statement:

A fair, transparent and trusted military justice system underpins discipline, enhances operational effectiveness and reinforces confidence in the ADF.

Objective Strategy*:*

- The Office of the IGADF will advance military justice values through independent oversight, engagement and education. By balancing the requirements of command authority with the rights of ADF members, the Office of the IGADF will support a military justice system that is fair, accountable, effective and trusted by Defence personnel and the Australian community.
- To provide independent assurance that the ADF military justice system is lawful, effective, fair and aligned with military justice values by conducting Military Justice Performance Audits; identifying systemic risks and opportunities for improvement; and providing education and evidence-based recommendations in accordance with Defence legislation and policy.

Performance Measures:

- Conduct a Routine Military Justice Performance Audit of every major ADF unit every 3 years and every ab initio training establishment every 2 years.
- Conduct a longitudinal study of all Audit Reports every 2 years to determine trends, themes and issues of concern, and provide the outcomes of this analysis to the Chief of the Defence Force, the Minister for Defence and the Minister for Defence and the Minister for Defence Personnel.
- Audit at least 3 non-major units each year that are not part of the DMJPR Routine Audit Cycle.

Strategic Objective 2 – Ensure outcomes are fair, impartial, accurate and timely

Outcome Statement:

Confidence in the Office of the IGADF is built through the delivery of fair, impartial, accurate and timely outcomes. We will communicate openly and consistently through our assessments, inquiry reports, Military Justice Performance Audit Reports and outcome correspondence, ensuring our processes and decisions are transparent and understood.

Objective Strategy:

- We will continue to improve the timeliness of our products and outcomes while maintaining the highest standards of quality, integrity and accuracy. We will clearly communicate the rationale for our corrective action and decisions so participants understand how outcomes have been reached, regardless of whether or not they agree with them. Wherever practicable, we will ensure participants feel heard, treated fairly and understand the processes that inform our assessment and decisions, thereby strengthening confidence in the Office of the IGADF's independence and impartiality.
- We will use participant feedback, quality assurance and post-matter engagement to evaluate the effectiveness of our processes, identify emerging trends and inform continuous improvement across the Office of the IGADF.

Performance Measures:

- Participants in IGADF processes continue to report, both formally and informally, confidence in IGADF outcomes, communication and feedback.
- Participant feedback gathered through the PILOT program demonstrates sustained confidence in the fairness, professionalism and transparency of IGADF processes, with agreed performance benchmarks achieved for key survey measures.
- There are minimal successful challenges of IGADF outcomes by external review bodies.
- There is positive external commentary about the Office of the IGADF and its work both from the media and from other government agencies.
- All submissions to the Office of the IGADF are acknowledged within 5 business days.
- Within 110 days, 85% of assessments, including professional standards matters, are finalised.
- Military Justice Performance Audit Reports are finalised within 4 months of the physical Audit.
- 85% of inquiries into the deaths of ADF members completed with 365 days of active inquiry time.
- Outcome correspondence in DSIR inquiries is provided to next of kin and potentially affected parties within 90 days in 85% of cases.

- 85% of complaints closed by the Office of the IGADF under sections 46(1)(b)-(f) of the Defence Regulation 2016 and sections 57(2)(b)-(f) of Defence Regulations 2026 are finalised within 30 days of submission of the complaint
- 85% of complaints closed by the Office of the IGADF under sections 46(1)(a) and (g) of the Defence Regulation 2016 and sections 57(2)(a) and (g) of Defence Regulations 2026 are finalised within 30 days of receipt of Commanding Officer decision
- 85% of complaints about early end of service independently considered by the Office of the IGADF under section 45 of the Defence Regulation 2016 and section 56 of Defence Regulations 2026 are finalised within 60 days of sole carriage (being either receipt of Commanding Officer decision, or from the date the IGADF decides to consider the complaint without a Commanding Officer decision being made)
- 85% of all other complaints independently considered by the Office of the IGADF under section 45 of the Defence Regulation 2016 and section 56 of Defence Regulations 2026 are finalised within 90 days of sole carriage (being either receipt of Commanding Officer decision, or from the date the IGADF decides to consider the complaint without a Commanding Officer decision being made).

Strategic Objective 3 – Collaborate with Defence to ensure proper complaint management

Outcome Statement:

Effective complaint management is essential to maintaining trust and confidence in Defence. Decisions and outcomes must be fair, impartial, accurate and timely to ensure Defence personnel and the Australian public have confidence in the integrity of Defence's complaint handling processes.

Objective Strategy:

- We will work closely with Defence to support effective, fair and accountable complaint management practices. Through oversight, engagement and education, we will help ensure complaints are managed appropriately and that Defence personnel and the Australian public are aware of and understand the complaint mechanisms available to them. By promoting transparency and continuous improvement, we will strengthen confidence in Defence's complaint handling system.

Performance Measures:

- IGADF promotes continuous improvement by assessing and reporting on whether complaints are managed fairly, impartially, accurately and in a timely manner. This is achieved through Military Justice Performance Audits, engagement, education, data analysis and oversight of corrective action implementation.

Strategic Objective 4 - Maintain trust and respect in IGADF through high quality work

Outcome Statement:

The Office of the IGADF is recognised and trusted by Defence personnel, Defence families and the Australian public as an independent, impartial and effective integrity, oversight and inquiry body.

Objective Strategy:

- We will maintain and strengthen confidence in the Office of the IGADF through high-quality, evidence-based and independent oversight, inquiry and assurance activities. By demonstrating professionalism, integrity, transparency and continuous improvement in all aspects of our work, we will reinforce trust in our findings, recommendations and services. We will monitor the implementation and impact of IGADF corrective actions and recommendations to support accountability and demonstrate the value of independent oversight.

Performance Measures:

- Defence continues to accept and implement IGADF corrective actions and recommendations, demonstrating the Office's effectiveness and strengthening trust and confidence among Defence personnel, Defence families and the Australian public.

Strategic Objective 5 – Enhance workforce capability, skills and trauma informed practice

Outcome Statement:

Within a trauma-informed workplace, the Office strengthens its workforce to be skilled and effectively supported, through workforce structures, roles and capabilities aligned with its statutory responsibilities and current and emerging operational priorities.

Objective Strategy:

- Ensuring the Office is appropriately resourced, both financially and through its workforce, to effectively discharge its statutory responsibilities, deliver its work program and respond to emerging priorities.
- Refining workforce structures to support statutory responsibilities, operational priorities and capability requirements.
- Using workforce planning to identify current and emerging workforce requirements, inform organisational design and recruitment, and prioritise tailored capability development.

- Developing and progressively implementing a skills framework to guide workforce capability planning, attraction, development and retention, supported by regular review and reporting.
- Evaluating and refining position qualification requirements to meet regulatory obligations and capability needs.
- Refining a sustainable learning and development approach that prioritises core qualification requirements and critical capability gaps while aligning capability investment with organisational priorities.
- Managing the potential impacts of challenging work and vicarious trauma through trauma-informed practices, mental health awareness, flexible working arrangements and a robust wellbeing framework.

Performance Measures:

- The Office completes a review of its workforce design and organisational structure annually, or as appropriate, with priority actions identified through an endorsed workforce plan.
- The Office develops and progressively implements a skills framework, including defined skills, proficiency levels and qualification requirements for priority roles. Initial implementation will commence in 2027, with progressive rollout and maturity of the framework over the following years.
- The Office develops and delivers a sustainable learning and development plan aligned with organisational requirements and priority capability gaps, with participation and completion reviewed and reported annually.
- The Office reviews psychosocial risks and the effectiveness of the Office's wellbeing framework, annually identifying and monitoring priority actions to strengthen trauma-informed practices and wellbeing supports.

Strategic Objective 6 – Strengthen relationships with ADF members, families and stakeholders

Outcome Statement:

As a public-facing organisation, the Office of the IGADF relies on strong relationships with ADF members, Defence families, veterans and key stakeholders. Engagement and outreach are core functions of the Office of the IGADF and play a critical role in building trust, increasing awareness and supporting confidence in our work.

Objective Strategy:

- We will work collaboratively with ADF members, families, veteran communities, external organisations and stakeholder networks to strengthen understanding of IGADF's role and functions. Through education, engagement and transparent communication, we will build trust and confidence in the Office of the IGADF and,

where appropriate, provide insight into our inquiry and oversight activities. By fostering strong and enduring relationships, we will support a more connected, informed and effective service to the ADF, Service and veteran communities.

- Through targeted post-matter engagement, we will strengthen our understanding of participant experiences and maintain meaningful connections with ADF members, families and stakeholders. This engagement will help build trust, improve transparency and support a person-centred, trauma-informed approach to service delivery.

Performance Measures:

- The Office of the IGADF performs at least 10 engagement/outreach activities annually.
- Improved public engagement should lead to increased interest and interaction with the Office of the IGADF. We will measure success by seeing an increase in website visits and enquiries commensurate with the activity in which we participated.
- Post-matter participant engagement activities are conducted in accordance with established timeframes, with outcomes contributing to stakeholder engagement reporting and continuous improvement initiatives.

Strategic Objective 7 – Improve internal coordination to increase efficiency and reduce duplication.

Outcome Statement:

Effective internal coordination is essential to delivering consistent, efficient and high-quality outcomes. By fostering collaboration, information sharing and clear governance across the Office of the IGADF, we will ensure our resources are utilised effectively and our services are delivered in a timely and coordinated manner.

Objective Strategy:

- We will strengthen internal coordination through improved communication, collaboration and planning across the Office of the IGADF. By reducing duplication of effort, promoting consistent practices and quality standards and supporting informed and timely decision-making, we will enhance operational effectiveness and enable the delivery of strategic outcomes. We will continue to identify opportunities to streamline processes, share knowledge and maximise organisational efficiency.

Performance Measures:

- Matters requiring a decision by the IGADF, or a delegate acting on behalf of the IGADF, are resolved or returned to the responsible Directorate for action within 60 days in 90% of cases.

- Weekly coordination meetings are held with all Office of the IGADF Directors to provide updates, discuss key issues and ensure alignment across the organisation.

Strategic Objective 8 – Provide assurance and follow-up on IGADF recommendations to support continuous improvement and systemic learning within Defence.

Outcome Statement:

As an independent oversight body, the Office of the IGADF provides insights and recommendations to strengthen Defence systems, policies and processes and promote continual improvement within the military justice system. Effective follow-up and quality assurance support the implementation of recommendations, facilitate organisational learning and help ensure lasting improvements that enhance confidence in the military justice system.

Objective Strategy:

- We will undertake appropriate post-matter follow-up to monitor Defence's implementation of IGADF recommendations and assess whether identified issues have been effectively addressed. Through engagement with participants in IGADF matters, including complainants, respondents, next of kin, witnesses and Defence stakeholders, we will support accountability, identify opportunities to strengthen policy, process and practice, and promote systemic learning across the military justice system.
- We will use quality assurance activities, participant feedback and post-matter engagement to assess the effectiveness of IGADF practices, identify emerging themes and trends, and support continuous organisational learning. Insights gained through these activities will inform future oversight, inquiry, audit and assurance functions and help ensure our services continue to reflect the Office's values of fairness, independence, integrity and accountability.

Performance Measures:

- Post-matter follow-up activities are undertaken for eligible IGADF matters within 90 days of finalisation, including engagement with Defence and, where appropriate, participants in the matter.
- Quality assurance outcomes, participant feedback and identified trends are routinely analysed and reported monthly to the IGADF Executive, with improvement opportunities informing organisational learning, service enhancement and future work priorities.