



Chief of Army address to the Defence Force Recruiting conference

Lieutenant General Angus Campbell DSC, AM, address to the Defence Force Recruiting (DFR) conference, Canberra, Thursday, 4 August 2016.

Check against delivery

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are meeting this morning, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respects to their elders, both past and present.

Today I want to talk about my expectations of you, the people who do the vital job of recruiting our fellow citizens to become soldiers in our Army. I will describe my priorities. We will unpack some of the things that are going well, and some of the things that need to improve. I will highlight the importance of understanding our target audience so that we can better shape our approach to them, and the processes whereby we recruit them. And, importantly, I want to hear from you:

- Is there anything that isn't clear about what we are doing, and why?
- What insights do you have about how we can do better?
- Is there anything that you need to do your job that you haven't got?

The number one priority I have with respect to recruitment is increasing our diversity; with a focus on women and Indigenous Australians. I want the best people for Army. Yet if we are accessing only slightly more than 50% of the population then we cannot possibly be getting all of the best people. The majority of people in the country are women. The majority of people who graduate from Year 12 are women. The majority of people who graduate from university are women. The majority of people in graduate programs in

professions are women. The majority of the people who run past me around the lake in the morning are women!

So it is not about women for me – it is about talent. And Australia’s talent is passing the Army by. It is also passing the Air Force and the Navy by, but not as much. It is passing the Army by a lot. I am losing talent. And that is what I want. I want the best people for the Army, and I am not getting them, I am not getting the choice from the other half of the population.

Today women make up around 12% of our Army, regular (ARA) and reserve (ARES) combined. My aim is that women will make up 25% of the Army – based on analysis of best practice across like work environments globally (military and appropriately related industries). I want and need the Army to benefit from the full talent of the other half of our citizens.

I know that there is a gap between the numbers of women who traditionally think of the Australian Army as a great career choice, and those for whom it has never been a consideration. It is my hope that a clearer outline of the Army opportunity may close this gap. The Army offers women the opportunity to belong to a unique, respected and values-led team which does great things everyday for Australia.

Your job here is twofold. Convey that message to potential women candidates, and do all that you can to help those who accept the message to progress from being a candidate to being a recruit.

I need you to mentor and advise candidates:

- Share examples of people who have progressed through our training systems,
- Assure them that they can satisfy their appetite for new opportunities without having to look elsewhere, and
- Inform them about alternative work models and programs that the Army offers its people.

However, I need to be very clear about something. We are not running a press gang. There is to be NO pressuring, persuading, cajoling or manipulation of people into the infantry or field artillery. The only women going to these corps will be self-selected volunteers, who pass all of the tests at the right level. This is about getting more women into the Army rather than more women into any particular corps.

There is room to improve and to educate potential recruits about what we can offer and the programs that the Army will offer to facilitate their enlistment. I refer here to good initiatives, such as:

- Recruit when ready,
- Recruit to area, and
- Pre-conditioning programs to assist entry in Kapooka, and to ensure success for young women prior to entering arms corps schools.

And I welcome any more initiatives you can devise. The opportunity is clear – I ask you to be across these matters and convey them in a timely and appropriate manner to prospective candidates.

In 1917, the Army was arguably Australia's first Indigenous equal opportunity employer. Indigenous peoples have served with distinction in all the wars our nation has fought. Unsurprisingly, they are as good at soldiering as any, given equal training and opportunity. Of all the Services, the Australian Army surely has something to offer that our Indigenous peoples want – connection with the land, pride in team and purpose, and education and training for the future. For far too long, the Army has accepted the government's target of 3% Indigenous participation as an *option*, not an *order*. I do not accept this is optional. Because of our unique connection to land, I want Army to go beyond the required and have a 'declared' Indigenous participation rate of 5%.

The Army is committed to 'Closing the Gap' through a range of programs but most notably, our commitment to preparing Indigenous Australian people for success in the Army. We are helping develop Indigenous Australians to meet the unique requirements of service life through the Army Indigenous development program and the Indigenous

pre-recruit program. Army recruiters must be across the detail of these programs and be advocates for them.

I am cognisant of the different situations and challenges facing Indigenous Australians in remote and urban areas. We will, necessarily, adjust our recruitment strategies to address the different circumstances of these areas. Recruiting staff at the coalface in these different regions can and will play a vital role in these adjustments. I seek your engagement and ideas as we move forward.

So how we will get to our targets of 25% and 5%? The hard logic of numbers doesn't lie. We are a 'closed system'. By and large, people only enter at the bottom, progress up through the system and then move out and hopefully back in, at least for some. Quite simply then, if every year you recruit 25% women and 5% indigenous, in time, as these year groups flow up through the Army pipe, there will be a point where we will hit the target.

I reinforce that my priority for diversity is not one which is acceptable to address 'when we get around it'. That is the old way of doing business. That is how we haven't managed to diversify. There is urgency in my goal of increasing diversity in Army. That urgency exists in Canberra and in the field Army. I need you to examine your 'energy levels' for this task and see that they are aligned with mine. If we are not actively pursuing this goal we will never meet our Army wide targets of 25% and 5%, because we are well behind on the glide paths directed of us by the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF). Hence, targets for FY16/17 are well above a steady state flow of 25% women and 5% declared Indigenous. The task is daunting and I need from you a steely determination to do your best.

It is early days in our reform of recruiting. We have lots of initiatives underway and we have some inkling of 'green shoots'. But there is more work to do. We do not always treat our candidates well or professionally. We need to be conscious of prejudice and bias, for example:

A career counsellor stating that while there was no model of an 'ideal candidate', they 'knew' which candidates would be successful based on seeing them in the waiting room.

Or;

A female candidate was advised by a careers counsellor to get a job as ‘unemployment didn’t look good when applying to the ADF’. The counsellor was reportedly aware that the woman was on maternity leave from her current employer, and considering a career change¹.

I think we can do better in understanding the differences in our target audiences. In a study titled *Men Buy, Women Shop*; researchers at a Toronto consulting firm found that women react more strongly than men to personal interaction with sales associates. The report found clear gender differences in approach.

Men: ‘Want to go to the shop, buy the thing, and get out’.

Women: The study found the following quote from an 18-35 year old to be indicative. ‘I love shopping. I love shopping even when I have a deadline. I just love shopping.’

The study also found that women are more likely to experience problems shopping than men. A key difference between the genders in this regard was a perception of ‘a lack of help’ and the attitude of the sales assistants.

For men, a sales assistant’s interest in helping them find an item is most important, followed by the sales assistant’s effort in getting them through checkout quickly.

For women, a positive experience is related to the sales assistant’s familiarity with the products in the store and an ability to determine what products best suit the customer. The survey further asserted women shoppers’ value sales assistants who make them feel important.

¹ From August 2015 draft report to CDF by Ms Julie McKay, Gender Advisor to the Chief of the Defence Force, *Women’s experience of the Defence Recruitment Process*

I think we can reasonably extrapolate these 'sales' issues to our 'sales' of Army careers. There are clear implications for our approach to women and understanding the manner in which they will approach the 'transaction'. We need to be aware of these differences and ensure that our manner and approach is informed by them. A 'one size fits all' approach is not likely to have the same success as one which is suitably nuanced to the candidate. I welcome discussion and your views on this matter.

Finally, before I conclude and take questions or discussion I want to touch on targets and achievement for recruiting generally and our priority trades specifically. Hopefully you are aware that Army's recruiting targets are modelled on our establishment. Effectively, how many soldiers we are allowed to have, and how many of each trade. If the Army doesn't fill this establishment we have capability issues. In short, we cannot do the things we need to do. It means I have units that don't have enough people. And that puts the people I already have in those units under strain. And each year that we don't meet our targets, the problem compounds for the next year.

Some of you may be thinking 'you should probably work on retaining the people we get for you.' I want to unpack this matter a little. The Army has consistently under achieved on its recruiting targets by 1,000 to 1,500 people a year, for a period of fifteen years. Over the same period, cycles of separation from the Army have averaged in an 8-12% band. The Navy and Air Force have had a similar cycle, although their separation band is lower at 8-10% per year. The pressures of retention and recruitment have not changed in 15 years.

We have a long historical record of under-achievement in recruiting. Let's fix that. Albert Einstein is attributed as saying 'the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results'. We need to change our approach, this is something Director General DFR and the Service Chiefs discuss. Meanwhile, we all need you to focus on recruitment, while I work on retention, in an effort to get our separation rate and cycle in parallel with the Navy and Air Force. I need you to be focused, fixated even, on recruiting for our team. You are my action arm in the war for talent and I want you to be energised to do this.

Now I wish to address some of specific detail of recruiting achievement for FY 15/16. Overall I note several areas of immediate concern. We only met 60% of our ARA general enlistment target for women. We also did poorly in officer entry. We only hit 67% of our target overall, and 55% and 10% for women and Indigenous candidates respectively. Not hitting anywhere near our targets for ARA women means that not only are we not on path to 25%. In fact, the actual percentage of women in the force in being is likely to decline.

There is also some good news. I note that we achieved 90% of our ARA general enlistment target for indigenous and this is a pleasing improvement. And we achieved 113% of our general enlistment target for ARES women. The over achievement of ARES women is noteworthy. There may be a correlation between this and the re-instatement of the 2nd Division unit recruiting cells, and their good work supported by and in coordination with DFR. This raises a possible discussion point about whether a similar approach with ARA units supporting DFR could work.

With regard to specific employment categories where we are failing, two outcomes in our high priority target list stand out. With direct entry medical officers we got 0%. Zero recruited against a target of ten. Australia produces over 3,000 medical school graduates a year and we couldn't get one? In regard to Electronic Warfare soldiers (ECN 663) we only achieved 41% of our target; 12 out of 29. When you consider the modernisation of the Army and the enduring importance of electronic warfare and intelligence, shortfalls like this quickly have an impact on capability. I have the list of other specific employment areas where we are falling well short of target, but we don't have the time to run through them all individually now. The takeaway point is that there is more to this than the conclusion 'we didn't hit that target' on a list. Every non-achievement has a direct and real impact on the capability that the Army can field. Your successes and failures matter and are directly related to Army capability.

Back in April I spoke to another group of ADF recruiters. My speech covered similar ground to today but more extensively explained the reasoning behind seeking to build an Army of 25% women and 5% Indigenous Australians. I encourage you to read it to get a full understanding of my views. It is available on the Army website:

<http://army.gov.au/Our-work/Speeches-and-transcripts/Chief-of-Army-address-to-the-Defence-Force-Recruiting-Training-Program>

A few months before that speech, one recruiting officer told the CDF's Gender Adviser that he 'needed to protect the Army from Canberra'. Immediately after my speech, an officer, regarding my direction about women and Indigenous recruitment, said upon return to his team that they were not going to do that (women and Indigenous). I subsequently invited him to review his posting options.

You need to understand that I will have no humour if my directions are ignored a third time. Just do your very best – that's all I ask.

Thank you – and I welcome your questions or observations.