

Appendix C The equity and diversity team's report

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RESULTS OF EQUITY AND DIVERSITY HEALTH CHECK WORKSHOPS HELD IN HMAS SUCCESS DURING THE PERIOD 4 MAY – 9 MAY 2009

CO HMAS SUCCESS

For Information:
CCSG

BACKGROUND

1. As directed by CCSG and CO HMAS SUCCESS, WO Harker and I joined HMAS SUCCESS in Hong Kong, in order to ascertain if continual rumors relating to unacceptable behaviour in SUC could be substantiated. Some of the rumors circulating were:

- A bounty is placed on the head of any new female posted to SUC, to see who could have sex with that member first. This includes female Officers, Senior Sailors (SS) and Junior Sailors (JS).
- That a predatory culture exists within the MT department on SUC, whereby some of the male SS and JS actively seek out young female JS's and coerce or bully them into having sex while ashore.
- That a sexual act took place between a female JS and a male JS's in public areas, and that MT Senior Sailors watched on and encouraged junior MT sailors to watch on.
- Those threats have been made against certain members of the crew if they speak out about the nature of the unacceptable acts being carried out.

OVERVIEW

2. The ship's crew was broken into groups, so that WO Harker and I or I could speak with peer groups, and adapt the content of the workshop to directly target the respective groups. Groups are as follows:

- All Female Junior Sailors (SMN, AB, LS)
- Male MT Junior Sailors (SMN, AB, LS)
- Male ET Junior Sailors (SMN, AB, LS)
- Male SU Junior Sailors (SMN, AB, LS)
- Male EX Junior Sailors (SMN, AB, LS)
- Female Senior Sailors
- Male MT POs
- Male ET POs
- Male SU POs
- Male EX POs
- All Chiefs
- All Female Junior Officers (MIDN, SBLT, LEUT)
- All Male Junior Officers (MIDN, SBLT, LEUT)
- All LCDRs were briefed on an individual basis.
- The Aviation team were briefed as one group (SMN, AB, LS, PO)

3. The focus of the discussion was on what is acceptable and what is not. The crew was reminded of their rights, i.e. to work in an environment free from harassment.

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bullying or any other form of unacceptable behaviour. They were then reminded of their responsibilities. Members were reminded of their responsibility to look after their mates, to speak out if something is not right, and to have the courage to do something about fixing what is wrong. They were also reminded of their responsibility to follow a legitimate order, and not to confuse directing and correcting with harassment. The workshop was then opened for discussion.

RESULTS OF WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

4. As the workshops were conducted within peer groups, some of the ship's crew felt comfortable enough to openly talk in the group format. Most groups raised similar issues, including the use of steroids and drugs onboard, the closed off cultural within the MT branch, inequality in punishments when it came to the MT branch, and the level of inappropriate relationships that occur onboard.

5. We advised the groups that we wanted to know about incidents of unacceptable behavior, or cultures onboard, only if they had personally witnessed it, or been personally involved. This was so we could determine whether the details were fact or fiction.

6. The groups voiced a number of common concerns that are shared across the majority of the crew, and through most ranks.

7. WO Harker and I offered everyone the opportunity to come and speak with us privately, if they had something they would like to discuss. We reiterated that we did not want to hear about rumors, and that we only wanted people to come forward if they had either personally witnessed something unacceptable, were on the receiving end of something unacceptable, or took part in something unacceptable. Many people came forward, and provided information that substantiated some of the concerns that had been raised during group discussions.

8. Major concerns raised by the groups and/or individuals relate to:

- Use of Drugs
- Inappropriate Relationships
- Sexual Acts in Public
- Use of Alcohol Ashore
- Random Breath Testing
- Equality in Punishment
- Leadership / Mentoring
- Predatory Culture within the MT Department

Use of Drugs

9. Most of the groups we addressed, and in particular the JS's, raised the issue of the use of steroids and recreational drugs by some of the MT and BM JS's. It appears to be common knowledge throughout the ship that steroids were found in the trash, onboard HMAS SUCCESS. It is a common perception that random drug testing is not conducted in SUC as it is too hard and therefore the culprits continue to use drugs. It is also a common perception that drug testing does not occur as it requires too much paperwork. The majority of the crew expressed a desire for random drug testing to be conducted on a frequent basis.

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10. A number of individuals have come forward and provided names of those allegedly using steroids.

11. There is a genuine concern from some of the individuals that have come forward, that some of the users are experiencing steroid rages. A female JS's has confided that she was physically and verbally assaulted during a recent Steroid rage by an MT sailor, and that another female JS was also physically assaulted by the same sailor, however she does not wish to come forward.

Inappropriate Relationships

12. As a group, the female JS almost unanimously agreed that it was easier to give in and agree to have sex with a sailor, than continually fight off their persistent attention. It appeared to be no secret that some of the female sailors were having inappropriate relationships with the male sailors. When asked why they gave in, the common response was that some of the sailors are big and scary, and they intimidate you to the point where you just give in to get it over and done with, particularly some of the MT sailors. It should be noted that these inappropriate relationships are alleged to occur not only with JS's across all departments, but also with SS's from the MT department.

13. A number of individuals have come forward and stated that they are aware that inappropriate relationships may be going on between female junior sailors and male junior Officers. I do not have enough information to substantiate these allegations.

Sexual Acts in Public

14. It appears to be common knowledge across the ship that some sort of public sex act occurred recently, in a bar on a table in Qingdao.

15. A number of individuals have come forward and provided the names of two Pot's who were present when the act was alleged to have occurred, and the name of the ABMT who was allegedly having sex with an unknown female. There is enough information from differing sources, to substantiate that this act did occur, and to substantiate that the named personnel were present.

Use of Alcohol Ashore

16. Most of the groups acknowledged that the consumption of alcohol (while ashore) is excessive and unhealthy, and that it is a major contributing factor towards the unacceptable behaviour that goes on ashore. When asked why there was such excessive drinking, the common response was due to work load. For example, if the ship is in port for four days, and you take into account duty, official functions, force protection and any other work requirements, it is not uncommon to have one night only, to go out and drink. This is a common attitude across Fleet, and not specific to SUC.

17. The female JS's admit that they drink too much when ashore, and that they get caught up in drinking games, i.e. drinking shots. They believe that they have less control over their drinking while overseas, as in Australia nips are measured, while overseas they always lose track of how much they have had to drink, as nips are not measured. This excessive drinking invariably leads to male sailors approaching them

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while they are in an intoxicated state. Invariable the male sailor is so persistent that he gets his way. In saying this however, there are many female sailors who admit that they willingly participate in both the drinking and the sex, knowing both are unacceptable.

18. In addition to the majority of the groups general attitude towards alcohol consumption, some of the male JS's admitted that "depth charging" female sailor's drinks without their knowledge is common practice, and is used to get them drunk more quickly.

Random Breath Testing (RBT)

19. A number of individuals have come forward and stated that when RBT's are being conducted, one of the POMT's tells his boys to stay down the hole if they think their going to blow over, and he'll cover for them. While there is nothing to confirm this has occurred, there is no reason to disbelieve the individuals who have come forward.

20. Individuals have stated that on two known occasions, two personnel have blown over and the paperwork is mysteriously misplaced and no further action has been taken. I do not have enough information to substantiate these allegations, or to warrant further investigation.

Equality in Punishment

21. Some of the groups brought up an incident that is alleged to have occurred in Cairns, whereby two SUC MT sailors assaulted police officers, which resulted in the police having to use capsicum spray to subdue them. Regardless of whether this is true or untrue, the perception amongst the ships crew is that, the two sailors did not receive a punishment, as they belong to the "protected pack" of MT sailors.

Leadership / Mentoring

22. A common perception amongst junior ranks is that not all SS's and Officers set a good example, or act as good role models. The most common issues raised were in the area of alcohol consumption, inappropriate relationships and dress and bearing while ashore. WRT dress and bearing, JS's state that Officer's leave the ship in the correct dress, yet they are seen ashore in inappropriate clothing, i.e. thongs, skimpy tops etc. Their perception is that, the juniors have to stick to the rules, but the SS's and Officers can do as they please.

23. A number of individuals have come forward and explained how they had on occasions escorted Officers to bed because they were too intoxicated to get to their messes. Again, there perception is that it's "one rule for us and another rule for them".

24. There is a general consensus amongst the PO's that some of the CPO's are missing in action, in that they are neither available as mentors, nor set an example as mentors. This perception is also shared amongst the Officers. This perception does not appear to be shared by the POMT's.

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Predatory Culture

25. There is ship wide acknowledgement that a CPOMT and at least two POMT's rule this ship, and run the engineering department. They are known throughout the ship as the untouchables. They believe they can do what ever they want and get away with it, because they believe they will never be posted off as they have unique specialist skills. This is a sentiment reflected through all departments and through most ranks. While the WO is not mentioned as participating in any of this pack mentality, it is difficult to see how he would not know what is going on. He is condoning the actions of his staff, by doing nothing.

26. They use stand over techniques to get what they want, they intimidate and bully their way through the ship, and ashore. They manipulate watchbills to ensure that the pack stays together when in port. They manipulate watchbills to ensure the pack will be covered during RBT's.

27. When new junior sailors join SUC, they either join the pack, or they are excluded from the pack. By joining the pack you are offered protection and an easy ride. The pack work together, live together and step together. If new sailors choose not to participate in their unacceptable behaviour, then they are locked out of the pack, bullied and belittled.

28. It is common knowledge throughout the ship that MT JS's are encouraged to stay down the hole if they believe they are going to blow over an RBT's. It is also common knowledge that some MT sailors (and BMs) use drugs, and this is accepted within the pack. The pack also offers protection and goes into shutdown mode when there are any allegations of unacceptable behaviour. They will all lie for each other to ensure that no dirt sticks.

29. Some of the MT sailors (both JS and SS) regularly gloat (in public) about the female sailors and Officers they've had sex with, and they even discuss their conquests body's in great detail, even down to details about their genitals. They compare notes, because some of them have slept with the same people.

30. Since WO Harker and I arrived onboard, two members of ships company have been threatened by a CPOMT, that they are not to tell us anything. They have been threatened with physical violence and with being posted off this ship.

31. The allegations that have been made against the CPOMT and numerous POMT's are difficult to prove, however, I have no reason to doubt any of the information that has been provided to me, in confidence. The individuals have nothing to gain from telling me, they just want the pack culture to stop.

32. It is possible that an investigation could be conducted into the "Table Sex" incident, however my expectation is that the POMT's concerned will lie, and they will threaten anyone else who witnessed it, to also lie. While people have come forward in confidence, they may not be so willing to be so vocal in a formal investigation. The main reason for this is that, they feel they will not be believed, that no action will occur, and then their life will be made a living hell. The same personnel have been

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named as being involved in this pack mentality, by many individuals, from all departments and from a range of ranks.

POINTS TO NOTE

33. The crew acknowledges that the Senior Equity Adviser (WO Shepherd) conducts regular Equity and Diversity training, and that Command regularly addresses the ships company regarding their behaviour ashore, yet they choose to ignore it.

34. SUC achieved 98% compliance with mandatory F&D training. However, the message does not seem to have gotten through.

SUMMARY

Based on information provided by ship's company, I believe that:

- It is difficult to confirm if "the bounty" theory (i.e. Bounty placed on the head of any new female posted to SUC, to see who could have sex with that member first) is true. While people talk about it, there is no real evidence to suggest that this exists.
- That a predatory culture does exist within the MT department on SUC, whereby some of the male SS and JS actively seek out young female JS's and coerce or bully them into having sex while ashore.
- That a sexual act did take place between a female JS and a male JS's in a public area, and that MT Senior Sailors watched on and encouraged junior MT sailors to watch on.
- That threats have been made against certain members of the crew if they speak out about the nature of the unacceptable acts being carried out.

Prepared by

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9 May 2009

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Sex act on Table

██████████ is alleged to be the sailor who had sex with the female sailor (unknown) on a table in a bar. ██████████ are alleged to have been there, watching the act, and encouraging the SMNMT's and ABMTs who were present, to watch on and clap and cheer.

██████████ is alleged to have threatened at least two members of the ship's company with physical violence if they speak to either me or WO Harker regarding any incidents that have occurred.

██████████ is alleged to have physically assaulted 2 x JS females on separate occasions, during a rage. He allegedly choked both females at different times, and head locked one of the same females on a separate occasion.

Sailors Allegedly using steroids

██████████
██████████ [name redacted]

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