Re-Thinking Systems of Inquiry, Investigation, Review and Audit in Defence

Summary of decision following consideration of Report on Stage B

Following consideration of the Report on Stage B: Models, the then Chief of the Defence Force (GEN D.J. Hurley) accepted the basis for the recommendations made in the report. However, he determined that the outcomes of most importance to the Australian Defence Force could be achieved, with less disruption, through implementation action that preserved most current structures.

Accordingly, in March 2014, the Chiefs of Service Committee decided to pursue the following reforms:

- Revise internal policy guidance to promote simplified and accountable decision-making, removing unnecessary formality and complexity, in order to empower commanders to apply judgment, to manage (rather than avoid) risk, and to be accountable for their decisions.
- Work towards a consolidated incident reporting policy, supported by an ICT solution, in order to reduce the administrative burden on commanders and enhance enterprise-wide understanding.
- Revise fact finding guidance to reduce unnecessary formality and promote better coordination of investigation activities, so that matters can be addressed more cost-effectively and proportionate to their scale.
- Transfer the ADF Investigative Service and some administrative inquiry resources to report directly to the Select Strategic Issues Manager in CDF’s office, in order to begin building a joint capacity to assist CDF to maintain strategic visibility and manage significant events with cross-Service / Group implications.
- Enhance the Inspector-General ADF’s independence from the ordinary chain of command through legislative amendments, in order to reinforce the integrity and credibility of this office.
- Transfer responsibility for the investigation of Service-related deaths to the Inspector-General ADF, in order to provide a more efficient means than the current CDF Commission of Inquiry construct while assuring the government and the public that Defence is responding appropriately.
- Consolidate the layers of the ADF redress of grievance process and transfer management of the process to the Inspector-General ADF to provide a quicker, more independent and expert mechanism for ADF members to seek formal review of decisions.