SUMMISSION TO THE 2015 DEFENCE WHITE PAPER

By

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Executive Summary

There needs to be a number of changes and improvements made across the Australian Regular Army (ARA) in order to improve its functionality and overall efficiency. This submission focuses heavily upon the author’s experience of being a former Australian Defence Force (ADF) uniformed member within the ARA at the Royal Military College – Duntroon (RMC-D). The main emphasis of this submission is that practical changes need to be made, as well as implemented that require significant overhaul at Russell Hill. The paper outlines and identifies problems in the ARA that hinder efficiency and cost-effectiveness and offers solutions to these problems.

Introduction

The upcoming 2015 Australian Defence White Paper will need to identify and set out improvements relating to ADF culture and personnel and budget and finances. These two areas have not been adequately dealt with and as a result the ADF has suffered unnecessarily.

After previously serving as a uniformed member at RMC-D and at Puckapunyal between 2012 and 2013 I have gained an insight into the problems the ADF has suffered at the ‘ground level’ that needs to be addressed in this upcoming 2015 White Paper. My observations and recommendations are confined within my areas of employment, specifically within the ARA.

This submission begins by identifying key areas where there is wasteful spending or duplication and its impact on budget and finances. The second section focuses on the relationship between uniformed and non-uniformed members and areas of improvement in order to increase efficiency in the ARA. The third section identifies areas of improvement within the curriculum at the RMC-D and the recommendation for the disbandment of the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA). This leads into the last section of this submission outlining gaps and areas of improvement within ARA culture and personnel. This submission includes case studies of the author’s own personal experience to add gravitas for the need for improvements.

Wasteful spending and ‘doubling-up’

During my military training at RMC-D I observed firsthand multiple areas of deficiency that need to be fixed and improved. Firstly, as part of the training curriculum at RMC-D, Staff Cadets (SCDTs) are required to conduct morning duties, which include cleaning the barracks, bathrooms and facilities as
well as a host of other responsibilities and duties. This is part of the curriculum designed to instil a sense of teamwork and professionalism.

However, the work conducted by SCDTs are undermined by Serco Defence staff who do the exact same duties as SCDTs. The ARA can make significant savings by cutting back Serco Defence staff who conduct the same duties as uniformed members. By doing the same duties as uniformed members, Serco Defence are undermining the training curriculum. In addition, the fact that Officer Lines and personal areas at RMC-D are maintained by Serco Defence cleaners, ignores the fact that Officers are more than capable of maintaining their own personal space. By removing the number of Serco Defence cleaners and maintenance personnel, the ARA can make small, but in the long term significant savings.

Obviously, the problem with Serco Defence is made complicated by existing contracts with the ADF. Existing contracts need to be reassessed and reviewed in order to avoid areas where there is a duplication of responsibilities between ADF uniformed members and Serco Defence staff, especially areas where uniformed members are more than capable of doing the duty of a Serco Defence member. Overall, by identifying areas where there is duplication, the ADF can make significant savings that do not negatively impact on the training of ADF personnel. This leads to the next section, outlining inherent shortfalls displayed by non-uniformed members towards uniformed members.

**Relationship between uniformed and non-uniformed members**

At RMC-D, Serco Defence and ADF public servants (PS) work ethic has been below professional, in addition there has been a lack of synchronisation between PS and uniformed members. A case study in point, from the author’s own personal experience, incidents include occasions when uniformed members at RMC-D needed to conduct administration that required the assistance of either a Serco Defence and or a PS member. However, the Serco Defence and PS members were often not helpful, their work hours were too short and did not synchronise with schedules at RMC-D. Ultimately, PS and Defence Serco need to make themselves more readily available for uniformed members and be more flexible. They should not withhold their assistance due to their work-hours and instead put the needs of uniformed members first, rather their own well-being. This will improve administration and the efficiency of SCDTs at RMC-D.

This issue highlights a much more inherent problem within the ADF, in particular PS’s pay according to how many hours they work. The number of hours PS work needs to be increased in order to assist uniformed members. PS’s pay should also be based on outcomes they produce, rather than the
number of hours. This will obviously not sit well within many in the PS, but should be considered and reviewed. Overall, it will help create a higher standard of professionalism and uniformed members will have more respect and a higher regard for PS.

Areas of improvement within the RMC-D recruitment process and curriculum

After graduating from the Strategic Defence Studies Centre with a Master of Strategic Studies in 2011 I have gained a strategic and contextual understanding of the ADF, like many in the PS. That being said, the curriculum at RMC-D is partially outdated and irrelevant, this will be looked at in greater detail further on in this section. In 2012 after a series of sexual misconducts and alcohol related incidences at the ADFA and at RMC-D, RMC-D decided to host an information session on alcohol and the effects of binge drinking. This information session that my colleagues and I received was poorly presented by the PS representative. The format of the session was similar to the Responsible Service of Alcohol briefing. Clearly, the problem of alcohol lies with the member responsible, however the problem is compounded when bars at the Mess have cheap alcoholic drinks, when they are subsidized, there are happy hours and therefore making it easier to get inebriated. Preventive measures need to be taken instead and this begins with the ADF recruitment process.

Therefore, the problem with alcohol and those ADF uniformed members who conduct criminal behaviour lies with ADF selectors during the military recruitment process. There needs to be a more efficient psychological process to identify those military trainees who struggle with alcohol, not just questions, such as; “how many standard drinks do you have in a week?” ADF selectors need to be more diligent but also the format and structure of the selection process needs to be overhauled in order to avoid a high attrition rate at RMC-D and ADFA. Conducting a two day recruitment process for Officer Entry candidates is not adequate and needs to be lengthened, or at least restructured.

RMC-D curriculum

Whilst the military training at RMC-D is exceptional and instils are great sense of discipline and leadership attributes, it is not entirely relevant to the modern day battlefield which is more asymmetric and involves the coordination of all armed services. The importance of Offensive and Defensive Operations are necessary against a conventional force, but it needs to be identified against which force in particular. Whilst the creation of the fictional Musorian army for training purposes does have its benefits, it should be updated to closely resemble modern day battlefields and forces. Basically, the training at RMC-D needs to be more realistic and consistent with the changing nature of the battlespace.
Another element of the RMC-D curriculum that needs improvement to produce better officers is training placements. This should be considered part of the curriculum prior to commissioning and before Regimental Officer Basic Course (ROBC). In comparison to the New Zealand Officer Cadet School at Waiouru, Cadets constantly learn alongside serving Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs). This should be considered as part of the training at RMC-D as it will mean that SCDTs will have better practical experience when they are commissioned. Whilst there are training curriculums that do conduct training missions alongside current serving ADF personnel and SCDTs, there needs to be a higher ratio in order to produce better training outcomes and higher calibre lieutenants. Furthermore, as a side note, it is a fact that those with previous military experience and who go on to undertake training at RMC-D, are the most successful during the curriculum. Therefore, there should be some consideration towards the requirement of prior military experience before joining RMC-D, whether they are current or reservists military personnel, this might potentially lower the attrition rate at RMC-D.

The removal of the entirety of the Australian Defence Force Academy

Recommending the disbandment of ADFA is not simple and requires a series of consultations and reviews. This section outlines some of the inadequacies and the reasons as to why ADFA is not beneficial, neither is it conducive for military training and nor is it cost effective because the outcomes produced can be better delivered elsewhere.

After working alongside ADFA Cadets (OCDTs), it is clear that yet again there is another element of duplication that the author has observed and therefore considerable overlap exists at ADFA that is replicated throughout other areas of the ARA training curriculum. To provide some context, one of the aims by the founder, General Sir Francis Hassett to set up ADFA was to increase interoperability between all three armed services. This goal has clearly not being fulfilled.

The significant overlap between ADFA and the armed services officer training facilities at HMAS Creswell, RAAF Base East Sale and Duntroon highlight a waste in Defence spending. OCDTs conducting military training at ADFA learn in three-years what other Cadets at each of the other armed services at their officer training schools do throughout their first-third of their curriculum. The problem identified here is that the ADF has a system that is both centralised and decentralised where there is duplication and same outcomes produced in different training facilities.

Furthermore, the problem of duplication is compounded by ADF’s university sponsorship program that offers a very similar program to those OCDTs at ADFA. In addition, the fact that the ADF provides support to current serving personnel to take up study that is not part of the university
sponsorship program and or ADFA, highlights wasteful spending that is not cost-effective and needs to be centralised.

In order to make significant savings, the ADF can dismantle ADFA and instead continue to provide funding for the university sponsorship program and continue to provide Commonwealth finance assistance for current serving ADF members who choose to take leave and undertake study to further augment their role. The outcomes are the same and avoids the problem of duplication. On a side note, one of the many problems at ADFA is that OCDTs who take up study which is irrelevant and not aligned to their future role within the ADF is not cost-effective and does not provide an adequate framework and or understanding within their field.

Another area that has been identified by this author to be ineffective is the issue surrounding military equipment. For instance, issuing equipment to trainees who do not complete the curriculum at ADFA and subsequently do not serve in the ADF is yet again another example of wasted tax-payer money. Understandably, trainees are required to reimburse the ADF for their degree if they do not complete the curriculum at ADFA or at their officer training school, nevertheless this involves a lot of paperwork and man hours that inhibits the overall functionality of the ADF and consumes resources that can be better allocated elsewhere.

A recommendation by this author is that military training modules should only be undertaken once the trainee has completed his/her university degree through Commonwealth funding in order to avoid allocating millions of dollars towards equipment and only to find out that it will not be utilised.

Whilst ADFA and RMC-D have produced excellent quality officers, overall the problems these institutions have created for the ADF unfortunately in some cases outweigh the benefits. The lifestyle and culture is unhealthy, for instance playing computer and video games does not induce a professional attitude. The incidents of sexual abuse and bullying also indicate that the hierarchy at these institutions are not professional. The lifestyle should be reviewed because it is in jeopardy of producing poor quality leaders in the future.

**Gaps and areas of improvement within ADF culture and personnel**

The recent sex scandals have hurt the ADF considerably, but the response by the military hierarchy has not improved the situation. During military training exercises I have witnessed firsthand the unfavourable treatment towards female SCDTs. Examples include female SCDTs not completing their assigned mission during training exercises but still qualifying for their respective module. This will create an unprofessional Army if this type of practice continues. In order to remedy this, female trainees need to be treated against the same curriculum alongside their male compatriots.
Conclusion

Overall there needs to be changes made within the uniformed and non-uniformed sectors of the ADF, in particular within the ARA. There is considerable scope and opportunity to make savings that will not hurt the operational capability of the ARA and instead will make it more efficient.

Areas where there is wasteful spending, or ‘doubling up’ needs to be identified and removed. To reiterate, this includes such cases as an overlap between uniformed and non-uniformed members tasks and responsibilities; duplication between the three armed services; and ADFA and university sponsorship and Commonwealth funding for ADF members who undertake study. This indicates that there should be a more centralised process for those wishing to undertake study. There is a consistent theme of duplication and overlap that needs to be addressed and by addressing the relevant areas, significant savings can be made and allocated towards such areas as better training outcomes.

This author hopes that significant changes can be made with regard to training and training implementation at RMC-D. This will have positive benefits for the budget and finance side of the ADF, which will produce tangible benefits in the long-term. In order to set these changes in motion reviews need to be implemented in relation to;

- outcomes achieved at ADFA,
- duplication, or overlap in training curriculum,
- PS and uniformed members responsibilities, and
- a better work ethic displayed by PS towards uniformed members.

Finally, these observations and recommendations made by the author are confined to his personal experience as a uniformed member.

I, ARTHUR MOORE consent to the publication of my submission by Defence.