



Australian Government  
Defence

# Women in the Australian Defence Force 2022-2023





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Requests and inquiries should be addressed to:

**Head Workforce and People Strategy**

Defence People Group

Department of Defence

Russell Office R1-1-C021

CANBERRA ACT 2600.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C1968A00063>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2021C00127>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A03712>

<sup>4</sup> <http://drnet/AssociateSecretary/security/policy/Pages/dspf.aspx>

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# Overview Women in the ADF 2022-23

## KPI 1

Progress towards women's representation targets

**In 2023 women representation in numerical terms has remained stable when compared to 2022.**

- In 2022-23 women represented 20.4% of ADF members compared to 20.1% in 2021-22.
- In 2022-23 more women joined the ADF than separated compared to 2021-22.

## KPI 4

Efforts to ensure more women have opportunities to reach leadership positions

**More women continue to have training and mentoring opportunities for their leadership development since 2021-22.**

- Navy and Air Force have achieved representation of women on all promotion boards.
- ADF women's representation on senior committees has increased slightly since 2021-22.
- Women received honours and awards (including non-operational honours) at a lower rate than their participation in the ADF.

## KPI 7

Completion rates for initial-entry training are equal between women and men

**Compared to 2021-22, there are still no gendered differences in Initial Entry Training.**

- In 2022-23, women have comparable completion rates to men across the Services.

## KPI 2

Progress towards reaching critical mass in identified employment categories

**Women's representation across all workforce segments remain stable with less than one percentage point increase or decrease since 2021-22.**

- Four workforce segments have achieved critical mass and continues to grow (enterprise and command support, health, intelligence and logistics).
- Navy has achieved critical mass in five of eight workforce segments.
- Army has achieved critical mass in two of eight segments.
- Air Force has achieved critical mass in four of eight workforce segments.
- Lower proportion of women in traditionally male-dominated workforce segment persists.

## KPI 5

Retention of women is equal to men

**The evidence in 2022-23 suggests that one of the key drivers of retention for women is having the flexibility to manage family and/or caring responsibilities with an ADF career.**

- ADF men continue to have a higher separation rate than women across all Services.
- Women's length of service across all Services has increased in the last 10 years.
- There are still gendered gaps in the uptake of parental leave.
- Retention of women post maternity leave is still lower at the 5-year post maternity leave mark.
- In 2022-23, Navy has the highest proportion of women retained after a career break.

## KPI 3

Increased acceptance of flexible work

**In 2022-23 the uptake of FWA amongst ADF personnel sat far behind the uptake within the general population with 8% of ADF women and 3.4% of ADF men accessing FWA.**

- Air Force Women (11.7%) were most likely to access FWA followed by Navy women (8%).
- Army men were the least likely to access FWA at 1.6%.
- Women in Officer ranks continue to have highest uptake of FWA.
- Women's perceptions of the value and acceptance of FWA/FSAs are generally more favourable than men.
- Army personnel are more likely to perceive that pursuing flexibility will negatively impact their career.

## KPI 6

Number of women recruited against service targets

**In 2022-23, the ADF met 49.8% of the recruitment target for women – 4.4% percentage point decline since 2021-22.**

- The proportion of women recruited into individual services was 30.4% for Navy, 15.5% for Army and 32.1% for Air Force.
- Officer entry recruitment of women continues to show promising results.
- Air Force was most successful at achieving women's Permanent Entry recruitment targets (60% met), followed by Army (40%) and Navy (29%).
- Gap year recruitment targets for women in 2022-23 has declined slightly across Services: Air Force (97%), Navy (96%), Army (79%).

**KPI 8**

Women are retained in the recruitment pipeline at a similar rate to men

**In 2022-23, the proportion of women enlisting continue to be lower than men.**

- Women continue to have lower conversion rates than men – on average 1 in 7 women and 1 in 5 men enlist after a OAT session.
- The proportion of women enlisting in technical and non-technical roles is still lower than men.
- Women’s representation in non-technical enlistment continues to be higher than in technical enlistment.
- Enlistment of women into Army technical roles shows a 3.1 percentage point increase since 2021-22 – slightly higher than Air Force and Navy.
- Women represent 28.8% of those who enlist into the Permanent Service with prior Service.

**KPI 11**

No significant difference in cultural reporting between women and men

**In 2022-23, there are no gendered differences in well-being but women continue to have moderately-lower levels of morale than men.**

- Both women and men have positive perceptions of well-being and job engagement but they have poor perceptions of career progression.
- In appreciating leadership, women have more positive views of Senior Leaders than men.
- There are still gendered differences between ADF women and men’s experiences of sexual assault. Women disproportionately experience and report sexual misconduct.

**KPI 9**

Women transfer to the reserves and use TWS options at a similar rate to men

**The TWS has significantly improved the use of the reserve workforce since its introduction in 2016. However, cultural challenges on inclusiveness and acceptance of part-time workforce persist.**

- There are gendered differences in the type of flexible work and reserve work undertaken.
- Uptake of SERCAT 6 continues to be used predominantly by women.
- Army SERCAT 3-5 women serve at a higher rate to the Permanent Force.
- Navy and Air Force women serve in the SERCAT 3-5 at a significantly lower proportion than their Service in the Permanent Force.

**KPI 12**

Increase in number of women in leadership positions

**The proportion of women in the senior ranks remain stable in 2022-23 and women continue to be underrepresented in senior positions.**

- There is a significant gendered gap between women found eligible and suitable for promotion and those who get promoted.
- The proportion of women in pipeline for senior Officer and Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Ranks remain stable.
- Women in Officer and NCO senior positions are still proportionately lower than men and women’s participation rate in each Service.

**KPI 10**

Women are represented proportionally in postings and deployments

**Overall proportional equality is yet to be achieved in postings and deployments.**

- The representation of women across Services in deployed roles at command, and sub-command roughly reflects the participation rate of women in each of the Services.
- In 2022-23, women represented 18.3% of total 6,168 personnel deployed across 29 operations.
- The proportion of women deployed is consistent with their proportional representation across the eight workforce segments.

**KPI 13**

Women feeling equally included in a safe and healthy workplace.

**There are some gendered differences in the health and safety indicators that can lead to negative outcomes for women’s sense of belonging and inclusion in the ADF.**

- Predicted probability of serious mental health illness is higher for Permanent women (7%) than men (6.4%).
- Permanent Army women and men are more likely to have a very high level of psychological distress than other services.
- In 2022-23, the rate of work health and safety incidents was higher for women in Air Force and Army, but higher for men in Navy.
- Women in Reserve force generally have a higher life satisfaction (73.3%) compared to men (70.1%).
- Overall, Air Force Permanent and Reserve members have a higher satisfaction in life than in Army and Navy.

## Introduction

*“Our diverse, committed and capable Defence workforce is our first priority. Stewards of Australia’s Defence capability, our people are critical for Defence to achieve its mission and purpose at home and overseas. Defence is focused on attracting and retaining people within its workforce, regardless of background, gender, age, culture, religion, ability or sexual orientation”.*

*Defence Corporate Plan, 2023*

Since 2013, the Women in the ADF Report (the Report) has been a report of record for Defence to track progress over time on women’s participation and experience in the Australian Defence Force. The report allows Defence to identify areas of progress and areas where attention is needed using administrative and other data collections. In 2016, a review of report content took place and recommendations made for developing and using gender diversity metrics. The recommendation was on the basis that indicators are an effective way to drive behavioural change. The Chiefs of Service (COSC) committee subsequently approved a suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to measure gender diversity in the ADF. These KPIs have formed the basis for reporting since 2016. Since 2013 the Report has been published publicly, initially as part of the Defence Annual Report and more recently as a standalone report.

Feeling safe, belonging, valued, supported and respected in the workplace are critical conditions to deliver a diverse, committed and capable workforce. The intent of this report is to monitor the workforce and workplace components that together contribute to these conditions and to suggest where attention needs to be paid at Service or enterprise-level to deliver better outcomes.

Starting in 2022 Defence has experienced significant change. This change is affecting the ADF’s ability to recruit and retain its workforce. Now, more than ever, the ADF is affected by Australia’s rapidly changing geo-political strategic environment, domestic requirements and challenges relating to increased national and global competition for people.

What does a diverse, committed and capable workforce that meets Australian community and workplace expectations look like in a military setting? In 2012, the Broderick Report found that Defence did not meet community expectations for women’s participation and experiences. Since 2012 the Women in the ADF Report has tracked women’s participation for the purpose of addressing these questions. In 2022 a ten-year report found that structural and policy-based interventions had driven increases in women’s participation in Defence. However, many challenges remained. The extent of these challenges illustrates the ongoing debate about what constitutes a diverse workforce, how the composition of a workforce shapes possibilities for individual women’s careers and the ability of the organisation to deliver equity and capability outcomes.

In summary, after ten years of effort, women’s participation in the ADF has increased, there is increased visibility of women across workforce skills segments, more women are deploying and flexible work is increasingly used by women and men. However, there is not yet a critical mass of women in the ADF overall and in some specific workforce skills segments. Women continue to have moderately lower levels of morale than men. Career structures in the ADF, as with Australian employers in general, limit women’s participation and their representation in senior roles and positions. Flexibility around family caring responsibilities is an area of difficulty and questions still remain about how best to support the needs of ADF families. ADF women consistently experience unacceptable behaviour at a higher rate than ADF men.

As the Defence Strategic Review requires changes in where and how people serve, it is critical to take into account how people’s identities, experiences, social and other factors influence workforce composition, their desire and ability to serve and where these might be influenced. This report contributes to that focus. Gender equity will need to be a significant focus for the DSR implementation regarding future ADF force structure.

# KPI 1: Progress towards women’s representation targets

Representation targets are a point in time headcount of women in the ADF at 30 June of the reporting year. This indicator also looks at net flow of women. Net flow refers to the proportion of people joining the ADF compared with those separating. A positive net flow means that a greater number of people have joined than separated from the ADF. A negative net flow means that more people have separated than have joined the ADF. Negative net flow can be influenced by individual life-cycle related factors and structural conditions within the organisation affecting retention.

## Key Findings for KPI 1

- In 2023 women’s representation in numerical terms has remained stable when compared to 2022.**
- In 2022-23 women represented 20.4% of ADF members compared to 20.1% in 2021-22.
  - In 2022-23 more women joined the ADF than separated, compared to 2021-22.

### Women’s participation in the Australian Defence Force



Figure 1: Women’s participation rates in the ADF, 2022-23

Each Service set women's participation targets to be achieved by 2023.<sup>5</sup> These were:

- 25% for Navy with an internal stretch goal of 35% by 2035;
- 15% for Army (achieved). Army has set targets to further support their efforts with an internal target of 18% by 2025 and 20% by 2035; and
- 25% for Air Force (achieved) with a revised target of 35% by 2030.

The overall participation rate for women in the ADF was 20.4% in 2022-23 remaining relatively stable compared to 2021-22 (20.1%). This is comparable to the Australian mining industry participation rate for women which was 20.2% as of July 2022.<sup>6</sup> In contrast the national workforce participation rate of women across all industries was 62.5% as of June 2023.<sup>7</sup>

In 2022-23 Navy was the only Service not to have yet reached its participation target. Navy has however consistently increased its women's participation rates each year since 2019-20 (0.5% per year) where there is greater variability in increases in participation rates for Army and Air Force. In 2022-23 Army met its target but had the least increase of the three Services. As the largest Service, the low participation rate of women in Army has a large impact on overall participation for the ADF. Air Force continues to have the greatest representation of women across the three services and makes the strongest contribution to increased participation of women in the ADF.

Women's participation targets for the Services and ADF were reset to a common endpoint of 2030 (Figure 2). The target for ADF overall is 25%. The Services agreed to the following targets: 28% for Navy, 18% for Army, and 35% for Air Force.

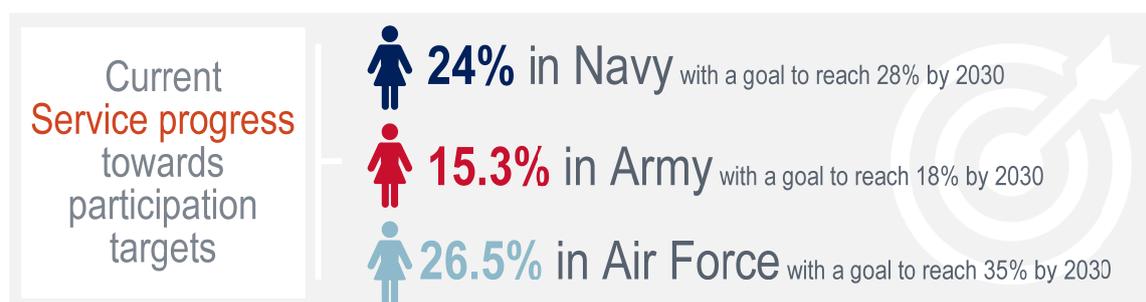


Figure 2. Progress on women's participation rates against the Service targets, 2022-23.

## International representation

Australia and New Zealand perform well for overall participation by women in the Permanent Force in comparison with other Five Eyes partners (Table 1). The United States has more women Reserves than does Australia. The New Zealand Navy has the highest representation of women among the five nations. The United States has the highest proportion of women in Army. Australia leads the way for Air Force women's participation.

For comparison, the data available shows slight overall increases in participation of women for all Five Eyes partners. The UK and Canada have recruitment targets for women's participation (30% by 2030 and 25% by 2026 respectively) which are similarly ambitious.

<sup>5</sup> Defence (2022). *Women in ADF Report, 2020-21*. <https://www.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-05/AR-2020-21-sup1-women-in-adf.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. Characteristics spotlight: 2022 [Internet]. Canberra: ABS; 2022 August 11 [cited 2023 August 28]. Available from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/characteristics-spotlight-2022>.

<sup>7</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. Labour Force, Australia [Internet]. Canberra: ABS; 2023 July [cited 2023 August 28]. Available from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release>.

**Table 1. Women's representation in 5 Eyes Defence Services as of 22-23**

	AU	NZ	UK	CAN	US
<b>Total Force (Permanent)</b>	20.4%	20.3%	11.5%	16.1%	17.5%
<b>Total Force (Reserves)</b>	18.4%	18.1%	15.9%	17.4%	21.6%
<b>Navy</b>	24.0%	27.9%	10.7%	20.7%	20.7%
<b>Army</b>	15.3%	15.1%	10.2%	13.9%	15.6%
<b>Air Force</b>	26.5%	23.0%	15.7%	20.3%	21.5%

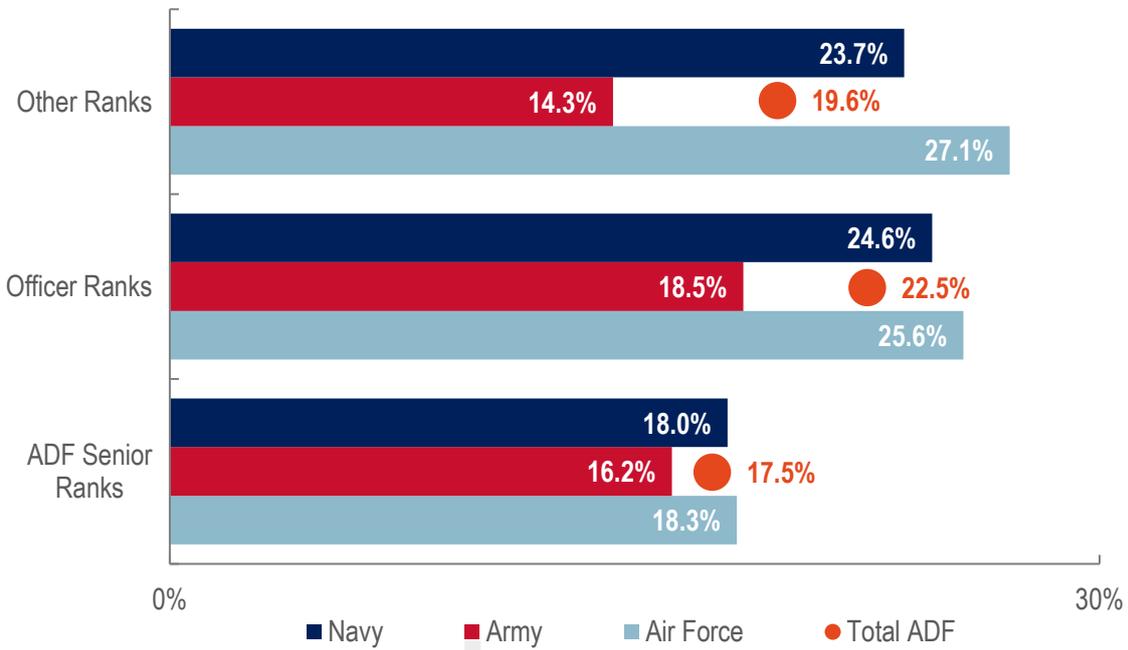
### Rank group representation

The impact of different levels of participation between Services becomes more evident when the proportion of women by rank is examined. Navy and Air Force women are visible in both Officer and Other Ranks and continue to be a higher proportion of women than the ADF average compared to 2021-22.

Women are less visible in both Army Officer and Other Ranks. A higher proportion of Army women continue to be in non-combat roles for both Officer and Other Ranks than in combat roles. Army Officer Ranks are 4 percentage points below the ADF average and lag behind the Air Force by 7.1 percentage points. This remains unchanged from 2021-22. The discrepancy appears to be gradually increasing for Other Ranks with Army at 5.3 percentage points lower than the ADF average and lagging behind Air Force by 12.8 percentage points when compared to 2021-22.

The hypothesis that the Army results are affected by the differential participation of women in combat and non-combat roles is supported by the data (Figure 3). Army performs at par for Officer ranks (but not as well for Other Ranks) when comparisons are made between Army with combat corps excluded and other Services.

Representation of Women by Rank Cohort and Service in 2022-23



Representation Breakdown: Women in Army Combat vs Non Combat Roles 2022-23

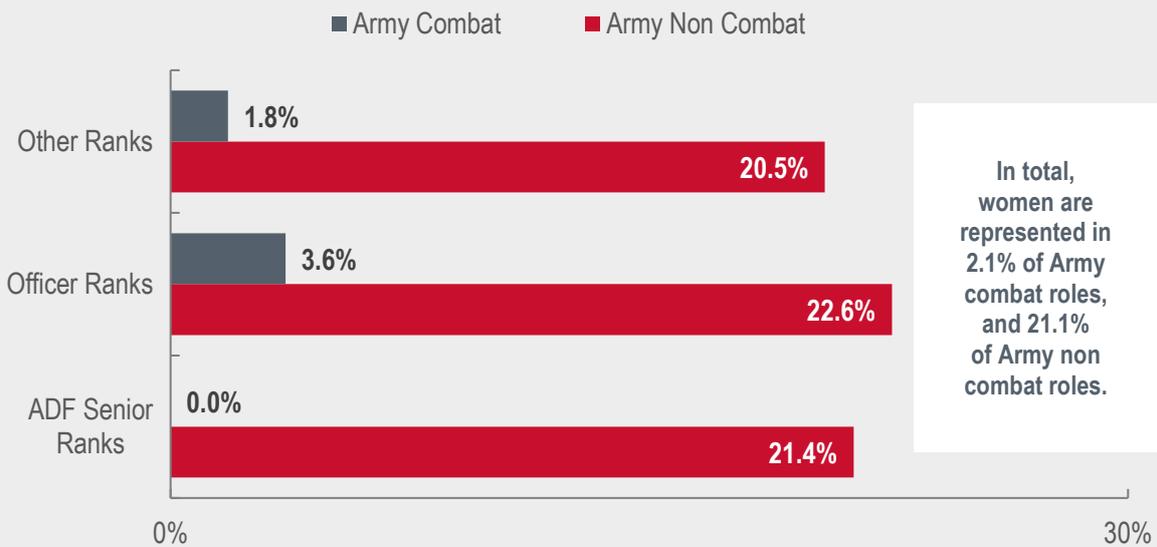


Figure 3: Rank group representation

## Net Flow of Permanent ADF members

Based on numbers alone, fewer women are separating from the ADF in 2022-23 than in 2021-22 (Figure 4). A notable change from 2021-22 to 2022-23 is the shift for women Other Ranks from 12% negative net flow to -1% negative net flow. More women enlisted in Other Ranks in 2022-23 than in 2021-22 and slightly more separated. Across the decade, more men enlist and leave than women. In 2022-23 the net flow is positive for women Officers and is higher than in 2021-22. This suggests that focus should not simply be on the recruitment of women but also on their working life in the ADF in order to increase retention. Women Officers are the only category for men and women that had a positive net flow in 2022-23.

Overall, there is a small positive total net flow of women in 2022-23, which contrasts with the negative net flow in 2021-22. That is, in 2022-23 more women are joining the ADF than leaving. This result is bolstered by the higher numbers of Officers enlisting than separating. More men left the ADF than joined in 2022-23 with a strong negative net flow for both men Officers and Other Ranks (where net flow is the percentage difference between number recruited and number separating). However, the proportion of negative net flow has decreased compared to 2021-22.

### Change in Personnel Net Flow 2021-22 compared to 2022-23

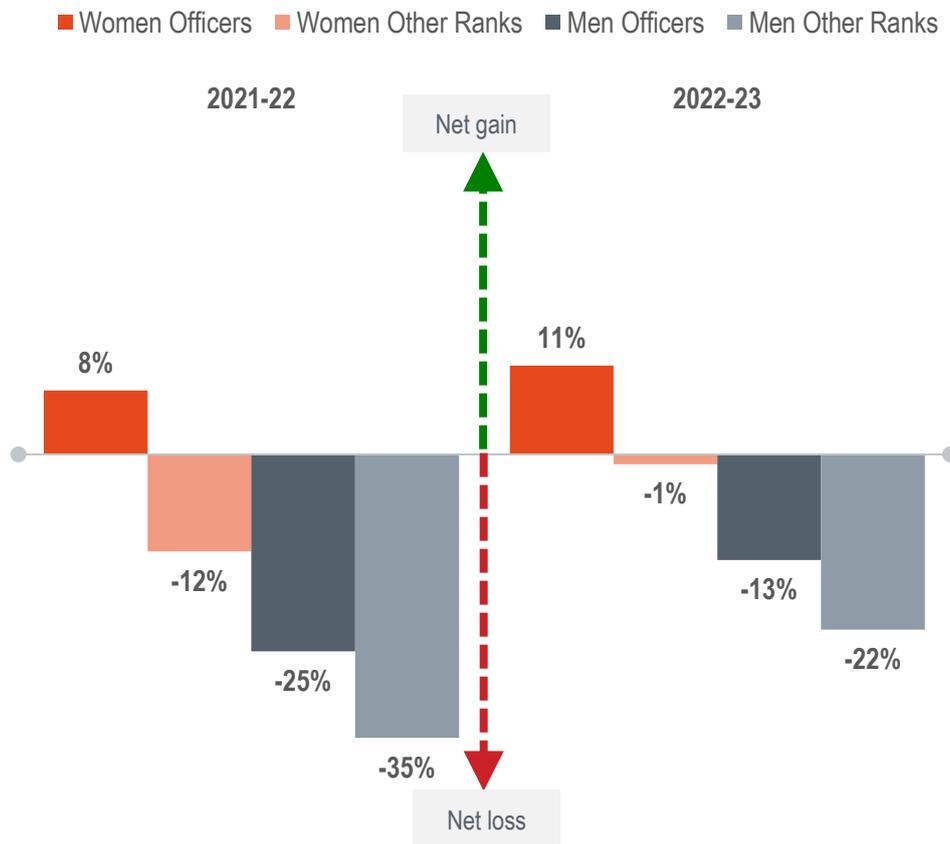


Figure 4: Change in Personnel Net Flow 2021-22 compared to 2022-23

## KPI 2: Progress towards reaching critical mass in identified employment categories

The assumption of critical mass is that a substantial presence of women has a positive effect on organisations that drives inclusion. Achieving critical mass of women across the organisation is believed to allow women to be seen for who they are, valued for the skills and experience they bring, and recognised for their contributions. This is an important step towards building a thriving diverse workforce.<sup>8</sup>

For the purpose of this KPI, critical mass is defined as 25% of a specified occupational group.<sup>9</sup> It is important to note that none of the services set specific representation or critical mass targets for occupational groups. Instead, critical mass is used as a tool to start to examine occupational segregation of the eight workforce skills segments in the ADF.

### Key Findings for KPI 2

**Women's representation across all workforce segments remain stable with less than one percentage point increase or decrease since 2021-22.**

- Four workforce segments have achieved critical mass and continue to grow (enterprise and command support, health, intelligence and logistics).
- Navy has achieved critical mass in five of eight workforce segments.
- Army has achieved critical mass in two of eight segments.
- Air Force has achieved critical mass in four of eight workforce segments.
- Lower proportion of women in traditionally man-dominated workforce segments continues to persist.

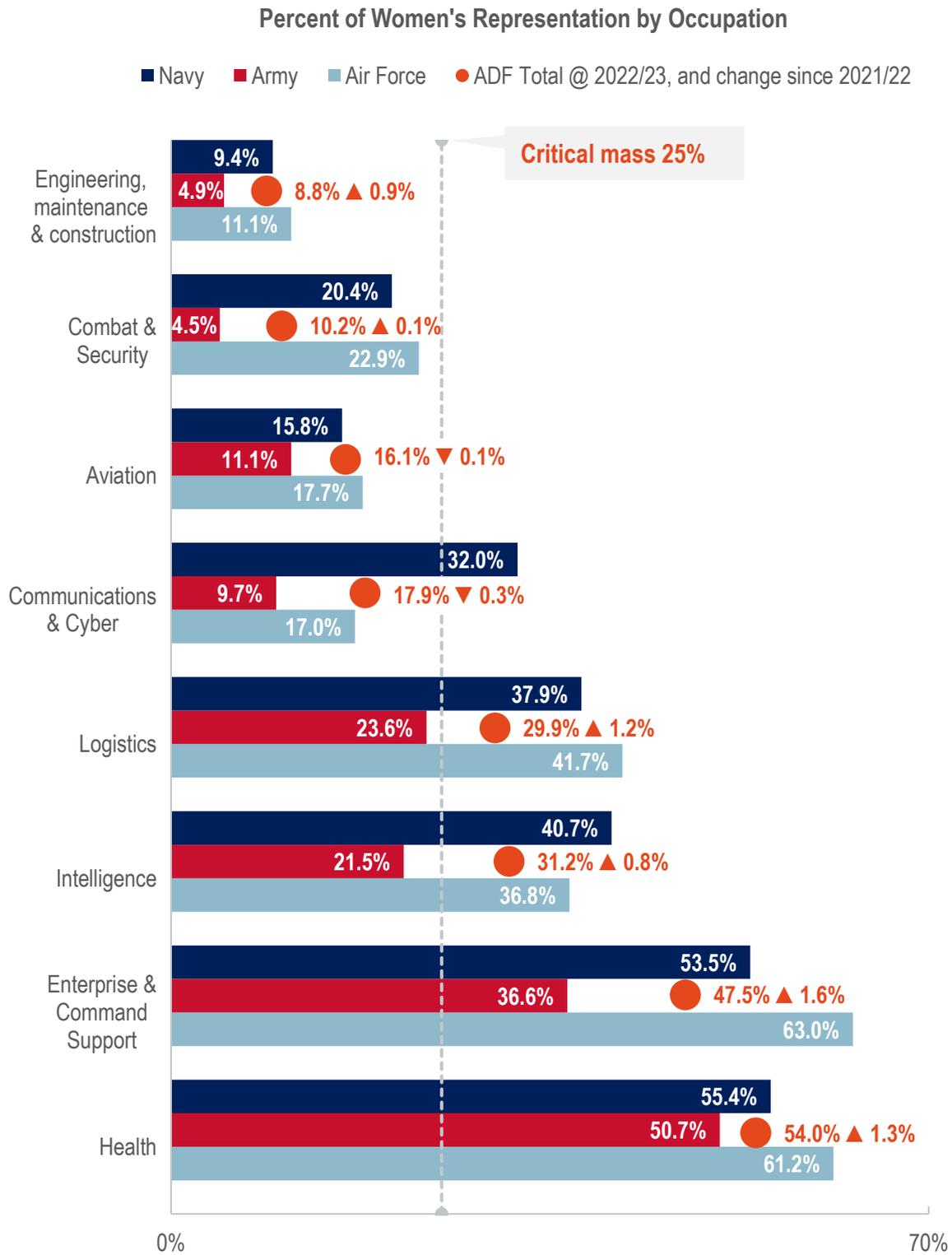
### Occupational Segregation

Overall, women's representation across all workforce segments remain relatively stable with less than one percentage point increase or decrease since 2021-22. Four workforce segments have reached critical mass and continues to grow (Logistics, Intelligence, Enterprise and Command Support and Health) (Figure 5). Enterprise and Command Support workforce segment shows the highest growth of 1.6 percentage points since 2021-2022. Workforce segments that have yet to achieve a critical mass of women are Engineering, Maintenance and Construction, Combat and Security, Aviation, and Communication and Cyber. Women's representation in Communication and Cyber, and the Aviation workforce segments continues to decline.

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<sup>8</sup> "Critical mass" is a theoretical concept coined by sociologist Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977) that suggests a presence of one third or more women in an organisation can begin to influence or tilt to create gender-equitable organisational culture.

<sup>9</sup> Women in Male-Dominated Industries and Occupations: Quick Take. February 05, 2020



**Figure 5: Representation of women in ADF workforce segments and by Service for 2022-23**



Service-level achievements of critical mass for women across workforce segments remain stable since 2021-2022. Navy has achieved critical mass for women in five of eight workforce segments. For Navy, women's representation across all workforce segments continues to increase except for Combat and Security, and Intelligence.

Army has achieved critical mass in two of the eight segments: Enterprise and Command Support and Health and are close to achieving critical mass in Logistics and Intelligence. Five out of eight workforce segments for Army show a steady growth except for Aviation, Communication and Cyber and Intelligence. Women's representation in these three workforce segments shows a slight decline since 2021-2022. For Army, occupational gender segregation in four workforce segments continues to persist: Engineering, Maintenance and Construction, Combat and Security, Aviation and Communication and Cyber.

Air Force has achieved critical mass for women in four out of eight workforce segments. Women's representation in six workforce segments continues to increase except in Intelligence and Logistics (no notable change since 2021-22). Women's representation in Communication and Cyber shows an increase of 2.1 percentage points since 2021-22.

The change in the relative workforce share of women across occupations aligned to Defence critical and at-risk occupations in the period from 1992 to 2022 has increased.<sup>10</sup> This trend is partly driven by the overall increase in participation of women in the workforce over the same period. Participation of women has increased by more than a 20% share (relative to men) across Intelligence and Policy analyst roles, Commissioned Officers (Management), Judicial and Other Legal Professionals, Medical Technicians, Ambulance Officers and Paramedics, and Telecommunications Engineering Professionals.<sup>11</sup> While there are some occupations in which the share of participation among men has increased, this is observed less frequently across occupations aligned to Defence critical and at-risk occupations.

In the ADF workforce, occupational gender segregation in critical occupations continues to persist. There is still lower proportion of women in traditionally man-dominated workforce segments such as Engineering, Maintenance and Construction, Combat and Security, Aviation, and Communications and Cyber (except for Navy).

This is consistent with data that shows that despite closing of the gender participation gap, some jobs and industries in Australia remain heavily gender segregated.<sup>12</sup> Of the 19 industry categories reported by the WGEA, only eight have gender-balanced workforces (at least 40% women and 40% men).<sup>13</sup> There is still a low proportion of women in industries such as construction and mining as well as in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and manufacturing.<sup>14</sup>

Achieving critical mass of women in man-dominated workforce segments for ADF will require addressing entrenched cultural barriers in critical occupations. For example, Service-specific measures for recruitment as well as retention programs must be put in place to strengthen the pipeline of women in STEM related workforce segments. The gendered gap in STEM-related workforce segments will not change without a cultural shift in gender norms and how we value different types of work by women and men.

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<sup>10</sup> Department of Defence (2022) [Workforce Outlook 2022: Economic and Employment Outlook](#). Directorate of People Intelligence and Research. Defence. September 05, 2023.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. See Figure 35: Change in the relative workforce share of women across occupations aligned to Defence critical and at-risk occupations, 1992 to 2022, p.72.

<sup>12</sup> Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2022) [Australia's Gender Equality Scorecard: Key results from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's Employer Census 2021-22](#). WGEA. August 29, 2023.

<sup>13</sup> Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2022) [Australia's Gender Equality Scorecard: Key results from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's Employer Census 2021-22](#). WGEA. August 29, 2023.

<sup>14</sup> Committee for Economic Development of Australia (2023) [Occupational Gender Segregation: Employment White Paper](#). CEDA. August 29, 2023.

## KPI 3: Increased acceptance of flexible work

In the ADF the Total Workforce System supports and offers flexible working arrangements for members, both formal Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) and informal arrangements, including changes to the hours, pattern and location of work. Providing support for parents and carers is an acknowledgement of member's additional responsibilities outside of duty, so that they remain engaged in the workforce.<sup>15</sup>

Progress against increased acceptance of flexible work will be measured against the following sub-indicators:

- a. Equal use of flexible work arrangements by men and women.
- b. Equal access to flexible work.
- c. Similar perceptions of the impact of flexible work on careers.

### Key Findings for KPI 3

**In 2022-23 the uptake of FWA amongst ADF personnel sat far behind the uptake within the general population with 8% of ADF women and 3.4% of ADF men accessing FWA.**

- Air Force Women (11.7%) were most likely to access FWA followed by Navy women (8%).
- Army men were the least likely to access FWA at 1.6%.
- Women in Officer ranks continue to have highest uptake of FWA.
- Women's perceptions of the value and acceptance of FWA/FSAs are generally more favourable than men.
- Army personnel are more likely to perceive that pursuing flexibility will negatively impact their career.

### Flexible Work

To address the rapidly evolving strategic environment outlined in the Defence Strategic Review, the ADF must focus on attracting and retaining personnel. In today's competitive labour market, offering an employment proposition that includes flexible working options is key to attracting and retaining personnel. In July 2023, 29.8% of the Australian labour market engaged in part-time work and a recent literature review found that employees would like to work from home two to three days per week.<sup>16 17</sup> Additionally, the ABS reports that almost half (47.7%) of all working mothers worked in a part-time capacity.<sup>18</sup> This suggests that a large portion of the Australian labour market desires flexible working options as part of their employment offer and look for flexible working arrangements (FWA) as part of an attractive employment proposition.<sup>19</sup>

Offering FWA is often more highly valued among families and can help to attract women. While the uptake of flexible working arrangements by women under 30 in the broader labour market had been

<sup>15</sup> The ADF introduced the [Flexible Work Arrangement \(FWA\) policy](#) to accommodate member requests to balance their personally commitments and service responsibilities. In response, the ADF has made available FWA through the introduction of the Total Workforce Model that consists of a spectrum of service categories (SERCATs), including the option for Flexible Service Arrangements (FSAs).

<sup>16</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023). [Labour Force, Australia](#). September 14, 2023.

<sup>17</sup> Williamson, Sue, Alicia Pearce, Helen Dickinson, Vindhya Weeratunga, and Fiona Bucknall (2021) [Future of work literature review: Emerging trends and issues](#). September 14, 2023.

<sup>18</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2020). [Gender indicators](#). September, 14 2023.

<sup>19</sup> The term FWA refers to the formal arrangements offered by the ADF including part time work (SERCAT 6), home located work (HLW), variable working hours (VWH), alternate located work (ALW) and remote overseas work (ROW) as outlined in MILPERSMAN, Part 7, Chapter 1 (DOD, 2022b).

trending upwards prior to the onset of the pandemic, the pandemic further boosted this trend. The ABS found that in August 2021, 36% of employed people had an agreement to work flexible hours, and 41% regularly worked from home.<sup>20</sup>

The ADF have recognised the importance of offering FWA as part of the broader people capability system and so established the Total Workforce System (TWS). The TWS was created in 2016 to support and allow different ways of working. In 2022-23 the uptake of FWA amongst ADF personnel sat far behind the uptake within the general population with 8% of ADF women and 3.4% of ADF men accessing FWA<sup>21</sup>. As shown in Figure 6, Air Force Women (11.7%) were most likely to access FWA followed by Navy women (8%). Army men were the least likely to access FWA at 1.6%. As shown in Figure 7, women and Officers continue to be most likely to access FWA.

### Formalised Flexible Work Uptake in 2022-23

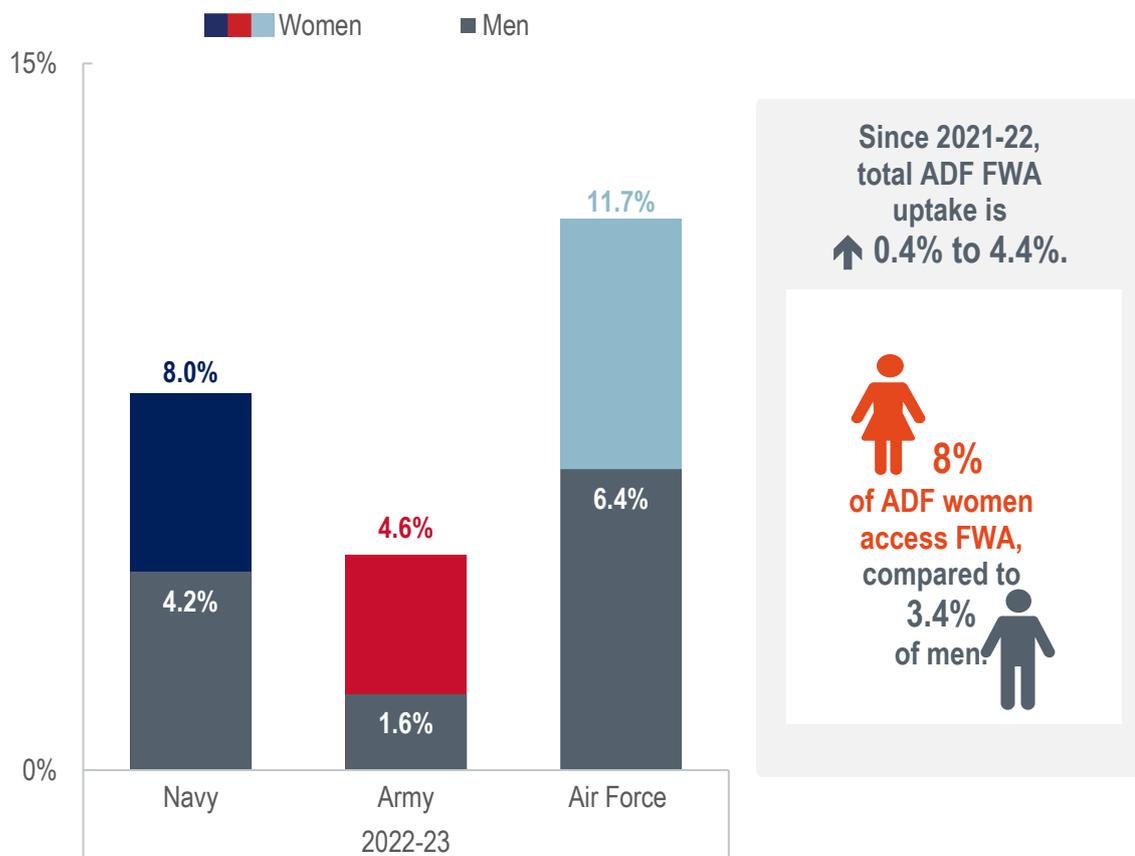
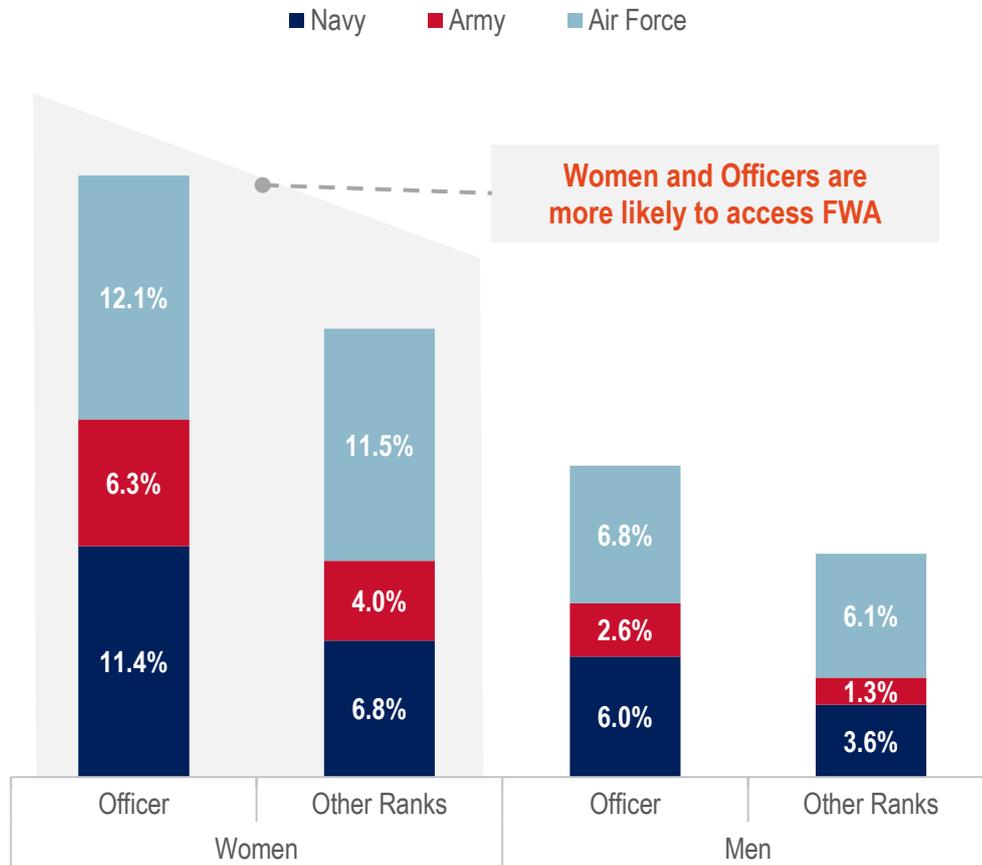


Figure 6: Use of FWA by women and men by Services as a percentage of total uptake, 2022-23

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/working-arrangements/aug-2021> | "working-from-home"

<sup>21</sup> Source: Defence Human Resources Data Warehouse.

**2022-23 Formalised Flexible Work Breakdown:  
Proportion of Uptake By Rank Cohort and Gender**



**Figure 7: Formalised flexible work uptake by rank, gender and Service, 2022-23**

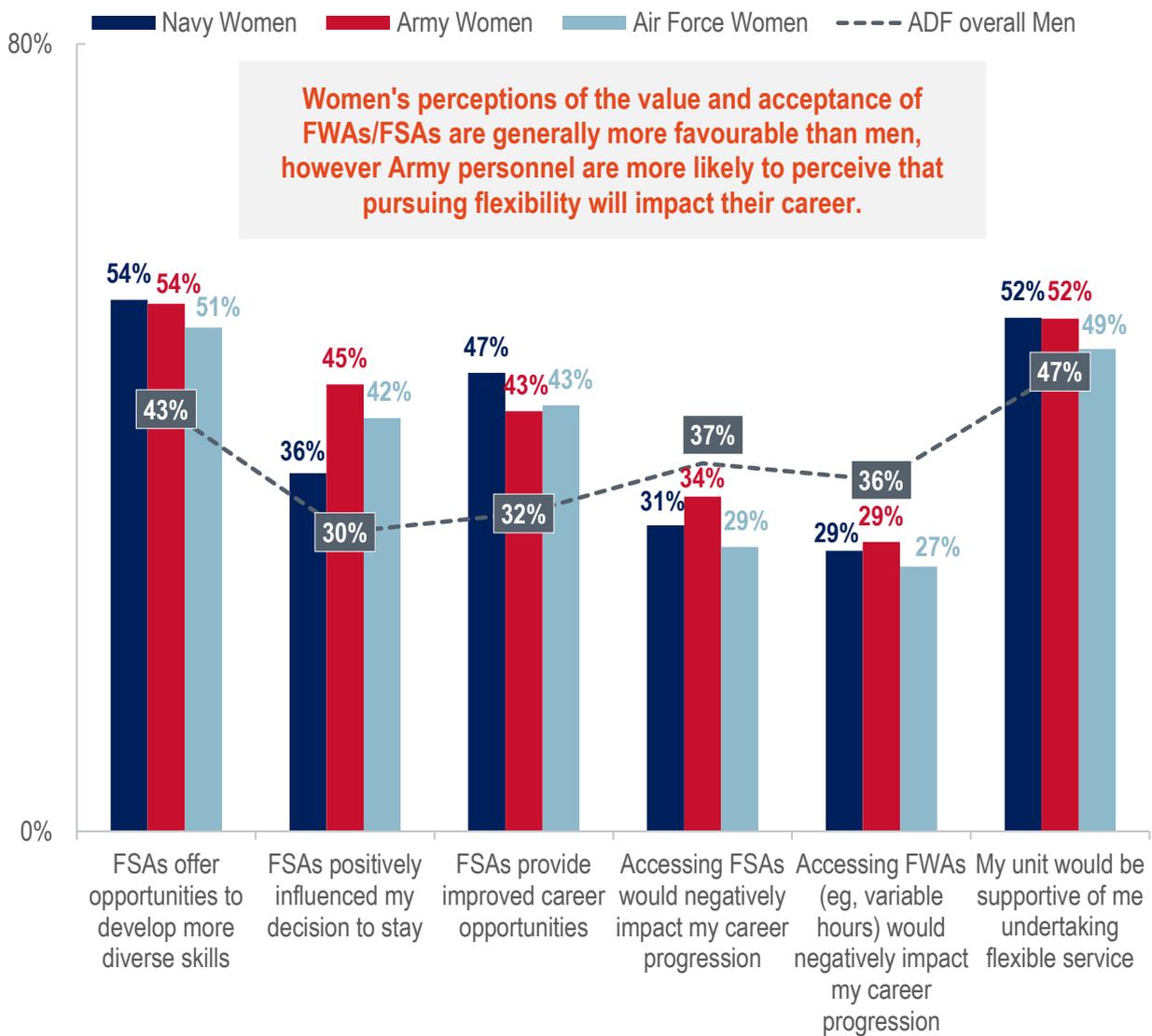
**Impact of flexible work on careers**

Between 2021-22 and 2022-23 there has been a decrease in positive perceptions of organisational support of flexible work. Women are statistically significantly more positive in their perceptions that flexible service arrangements provide improved career opportunities. A statistically significantly smaller proportion of women believe that accessing Flexible Service Arrangements and/or Flexible Work Arrangements would negatively impact their career progression. In 2022-23, 28% of ADF women and 35.7% of ADF men considered their career would be negatively affected by accessing flexible working arrangements. Compared with 2021-22 this indicates an improvement in the recognition of the value of flexible work. Overall work still needs to be done to reduce negative perceptions of FWA for ADF members.

The cultural attitudes around accessing FWA and the perception that working less than full time can negatively impact ones career trajectory may be hindering the attraction, recruitment and retention initiatives and contributing to higher work life balance dissatisfaction for Army personnel, another metric that is on the rise as reported in the Defence Workforce Experience Report.<sup>22</sup>

Flexible work arrangements continue to be important enablers of a diverse and committed workforce. To achieve the workforce aspirations as outlined in the DSR, attention must focus on changing negative perceptions of flexible work and of individuals who access these arrangements in order to have a positive impact on recruitment and retention in the future.

### Affirmative Perceptions of Flexible Service or Work Arrangements (FSAs/FWAs) in 2022-23



**Figure 8: Reported perceptions of Flexible Service impacting career, 2022-23**

<sup>22</sup> 2022 Defence Workforce Experience Report.

## KPI 4: Efforts to ensure more women have opportunities to reach leadership

Leadership training in the ADF is an important way that enable future women leaders to develop leadership competency so that they are recognised and valued and that their contribution is seen.

Ensuring that more women have opportunities to reach leadership positions is measured against the following sub-indicators:

- a. An increasing proportion of women are involved in mentoring, sponsorship and networking programs. There is a working assumption that mentoring, sponsorship and networking are valuable. This may hold true at the level of individual benefit but not at an organisational level.
- b. Women participate in Defence-sponsored education at a proportional rate to men.
- c. Women are represented on all promotion boards
- d. Women are represented on all senior committees.
- e. The contribution of women and men is valued and recognised equally (through representation across Defence Honours and Awards).

### Key Findings for KPI 4

**More women continue to have training and mentoring opportunities for their leadership development since 2021-22.**

- Navy and Air Force have achieved representation of women on all promotion boards.
- ADF women's representation on senior committees has increased slightly since 2021-22.
- Women received honours and awards (including non-operational honours) at a lower proportion than their participation in the ADF.

### Mentoring, Sponsorship and Networking

Each service offers a range of mentoring programs to meet service-specific member needs. Compared to 2021/22 substantially more Navy women participated in mentoring or leadership programs in 2022-23 (more than double the previous year in some programs). Numbers of Army women reported as participating in these programs increased noting that the programs offered differ from 2021/22 (9 in 2021-22 to 16 in 2022/23). Air Force numbers of women participating in these programs decreased however, only one cohort was run in 2022-23 compared to two the previous year (241 in 2021-22 compared to 80 in 2022-23).

For Air Force women the Women's Integrated Networking Group (WINGs) program brings women of all employment groups and ranks together to provide mutual support and advice for having a lasting career in Air Force. Participation numbers in WINGs have remained relatively stable comparing 2021-22 to 2022-23 (857 to 847).

**Table 2. Single Service programs that support mentoring, networking and sponsorship and number of women attending, 2022-23.**

Navy		Army		Air Force	
Program	No.	Program	No.	Program	No.
Navy Women Mentoring	186	United States NCO Leadership Center of Excellence	1	Art of Mentoring Cohort	80
Advanced Leadership Program	8	Group individual executive coaching program	2	WINGS	847
Executive Ready Program	12	eMPower- enterprise wide mentoring program	13		
Leading Edge	6				
Women and Leadership Australia symposiums	34				
Impact Program	4				

## Access to Professional Education

The percentage of women participating in ADFA Post-Graduate Study for Navy has remained stable. (Table 3). Army has seen the greatest decrease the use of the Defence Assisted Study Scheme while Air Force has had the greatest decrease in ADFA Post-Graduate study between 2021-22 and 2022-23. The participation rates of women in Army and Navy are comparable, while Air Force's participation is lower. National figures on the representation of women with completed undergraduate and postgraduate higher education courses is 63%.<sup>23</sup> Although women continue to access and succeed in education this is not yet mirrored by workplace equality in the wider community or in the ADF.

**Table 3: Women's participation rate in Professional Education schemes, 2021-22 and 2022-23**

Education Scheme	Navy		Army		Air Force	
	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23
ADFA Post-Graduate study	47.8 %	47.5 %	68.3 %	49.9 %	50 %	24 %
Defence Assisted Study Scheme	50.3 %	50.4 %	79 %	51.6 %	52 %	44 %
Long Term Civil Schooling	86.3 %	85.3 %	100 %	87.5 %	55 %	78 %
Chief of Defence Force Fellowship	0 %	0 %	0 %	--	0 %	100 %
Sir Richard Williams Research Fellowship	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100 %	0 %

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/education-and-work-australia/latest-release> 13 Sep. 23.

## Representation of Women in Promotional Boards and Senior Committees

It is ADF policy to have women represented on all Promotion Boards. In Navy and Air Force, this policy also applies to Selection Boards for command and charge appointments as well as Warrant Officer Tier selections. All three Services were close to achieving this goal (Table 4). For Army the proportion of boards with at least one woman officer has decreased, however, the number of promotion boards for Army has also substantially increased from 2021-22.

**Table 4: Number and proportion of promotion boards (for permanent force - SERCAT 7-6) with at least one woman board member by Service and rank group, 2022-23**

	Navy	Army	Air Force
<b>Officers</b>	22 of 22 boards (100%)	42 of 53 boards (79%)	80 of 80 boards (100%)
<b>Other ranks</b>	56 of 56 boards (100%)	106 of 106 boards (100%)	133 of 133 boards (100%)
<b>Total promotion boards with at least one woman member</b>	78 of 78 boards (100%)	148 of 159 boards (93%)	213 of 213 boards (100%)

## Representation of ADF women on Defence senior decision-making committees

The Australian Government has committed to a gender diversity target of women holding 50% of Government board positions overall, and women and men holding at least 40% of positions at the individual board level. As of December 2021, this target was achieved.<sup>24</sup> The Department of Defence's progress towards this target is reported annually to Government.<sup>25</sup>

*In 2022-23 one Defence Committee had no women on it and the overall representation of women was 27%. ADF women were not represented on four of twelve committees and represented only 20% of the total committee membership.*

Women's representation in senior Defence committees and other decision-making processes is an essential element of broad governance requirements, and all peace and security efforts. In 2022-23, ADF women continue to be under-represented. In 2022-23, across the twelve Tier 1-3 committees, ADF women constituted 19.8% of the ADF members, up from 18.8% from the previous year (Table 5). ADF women were represented in only eight of the twelve Defence committees;<sup>26</sup> their proportion overall constituted 10.8%, up from 10.3% the previous year. While ADF women remain under-represented in senior positions, the trend is unlikely to change in the short to medium term. Defence will continue to fall short of achieving the Government's gender balance target.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/leadership/gender-balance-australian-government-boards>.

<sup>25</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Report 2021-22. Retrieved from <https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/resource/download/gender-balance-on-australian-government-boards.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> In FY 22-23 two new tier 3 enterprise committees were established and data for these committees is not included, there is also limited visibility of Tier 3 membership so there may be some anomalies in the data. The COSC Senior Female positions were included, but were vacant for most of the year and have recently been abolished.

Table 5: 2022-23 committee representation<sup>27</sup>

	No. ADF Men	No. ADF Women	No. APS Men	No. APS Women	Proportion of Women ADF & APS	Proportion of Women ADF only
<b>Tier 1 Committees</b>						
Defence Committee (DC)	3	0	4	0	0%	0%
Defence Audit & Risk Committee (DARC)	1	0	3	2	33%	0%
<b>Tier 2 Committees</b>						
Chiefs of Service Committee (COSC)	9	5	1	0	33%	36%
Enterprise Business Committee (EBC)	8	2	6	3	26%	20%
Investment Committee (IC)	6	0	7	3	19%	0%
Defence Strategic Policy Committee	4	0	3	2	22%	0%
<b>Tier 3 Committees</b>						
Defence People Committee	6	1	2	5	43%	14%
Defence Finance and Resourcing Committee	6	1	7	2	19%	14%
Defence Communication & IS Capability Committee	8	2	7	3	25%	20%
Defence Security Committee	6	2	2	4	43%	25%
Defence Joint Warfare Committee	7	2	0	0	22%	22%
Intelligence Enterprise Committee	5	2	4	2	31%	29%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>20%</b>

## Honours and Awards

In 2022-23 18.2% of all honours and awards presented were given to women compared to 17% the previous year. This is a lower rate than the proportion of women in the ADF (20.4%) (Annex C). Table 6 offers a straightforward comparison of honours and awards to women as a proportion of all honours and awards.

Army presented the greatest number of honours and awards overall followed by Navy and Air Force. Navy presented honours and awards to women at a lower rate than their overall participation rate (22.3% compared with 24%). Army presented honours and awards at a lower rate than women’s participation in Army (14.2% compared with 15.3%) however, this was an increase in the proportion of awards given in 2021-22. Air Force presented honours and awards to women at a lower rate than their overall participation in Air Force (22.1% compared with 26.1%) (Annex C). There was a reduction in the proportion of awards given by Navy and Air Force from 2021-22 to 2022-23. As a proportion of awards and honours given, women are less likely to receive honours and awards in Army and more likely to be recognised in Air Force and Navy (Table 6). Formal recognition is a symbolic and tangible way to demonstrate that women are valued.

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*In 2022-23 women received 16.8% of all Operational awards and 18.6% of Non-Operational honours and awards.*

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<sup>27</sup> Source: Defence Human Resource Metrics System. Only permanent members and permanently invited members are included.

**Table 6: Formal Honours and Awards by Service 2022-23 of awards to women as a proportion of all awards**

	Navy	Army	Air Force	Total to ADF Women
<b>Operational Service Awards</b>				
Distinguished Service Cross and Medal	0 of 0 awards (0.0%)	0 of 5 awards (0.0%)	0 of 1 awards (0.0%)	0 of 6 awards (0.0%)
Conspicuous Service Cross and Medal	0 of 0 awards (0.0%)	0 of 10 awards (0.0%)	1 of 3 awards (33.3%)	1 of 13 awards (8.0%)
Operational Service Medal	133 of 646 awards (20.6%)	101 of 732 awards (13.8%)	21 of 123 awards (17.1%)	255 of 1,501 awards (17.0%)
<b>Women's TOTAL Operational Service Awards</b>	133 of 646 awards (20.6%)	101 of 747 awards (13.5%)	22 of 127 awards (17.3%)	256 of 1,520 awards (16.8%)
<b>Non-Operational Service Awards</b>				
Order of Australia, Officer member and Medal	2 of 13 awards (15.4%)	4 of 23 awards (17.4%)	3 of 13 awards (35.2%)	9 of 49 awards (18.4%)
Conspicuous Service Cross and medal	10 of 28 awards (35.7%)	9 of 53 awards (17.0%)	9 of 27 awards (33.3%)	28 of 108 awards (25.9%)
Australia Day Medallion	14 of 46 awards (30.4%)	26 of 86 awards (30.2%)	18 of 55 awards (32.7%)	58 of 187 awards (31.0%)
Defence commendations	51 of 175 awards (29.1%)	51 of 315 awards (16.2%)	89 of 301 awards (29.6%)	173 of 736 awards (23.5%)
Service Tenure Medals	234 of 1,081 awards (21.6%)	270 of 2,092 awards (12.9%)	282 of 1,428 awards (19.7%)	786 of 4,601 awards (17.1%)
<b>Women's TOTAL Non-Operational Service Awards</b>	311 of 1,032 awards (30.1%)	360 of 2,569 awards (14.0%)	401 of 1,787 awards (22.4%)	1,072 of 6,345 awards (16.9%)
<b>Percentage of women receiving a Honour and Award from all awards</b>	444 of 1,989 awards (22.3%)	461 of 3,256 awards (14.2%)	423 of 1,914 awards (22.1%)	1,328 of 7,159 awards (18.6%)

## KPI 5: Retention of women is equal to men

Retention of our people poses substantial workforce challenge and risk for Defence. The Defence Strategic Review highlights the government's commitment to retention of a highly skilled workforce that is supported and enabled.

Retention is assumed to be a function of a supportive workplace environment where all members, including women are recognised, valued and respected. This chapter must be read in conjunction with the whole report to understand how the KPIs interact and influence each other to create push and pull factors that influence women's experience in the ADF and decision to stay or leave.

Progress towards retention of women is measured against the following sub-indicators:

- a. Women are retained in the ADF at the same rate as men.
- b. The gap between women's and men's time in Service (at separation) is reduced.
- c. Women and men are retained at the same rate after maternity and parental leave.
- d. Childcare meets family needs.

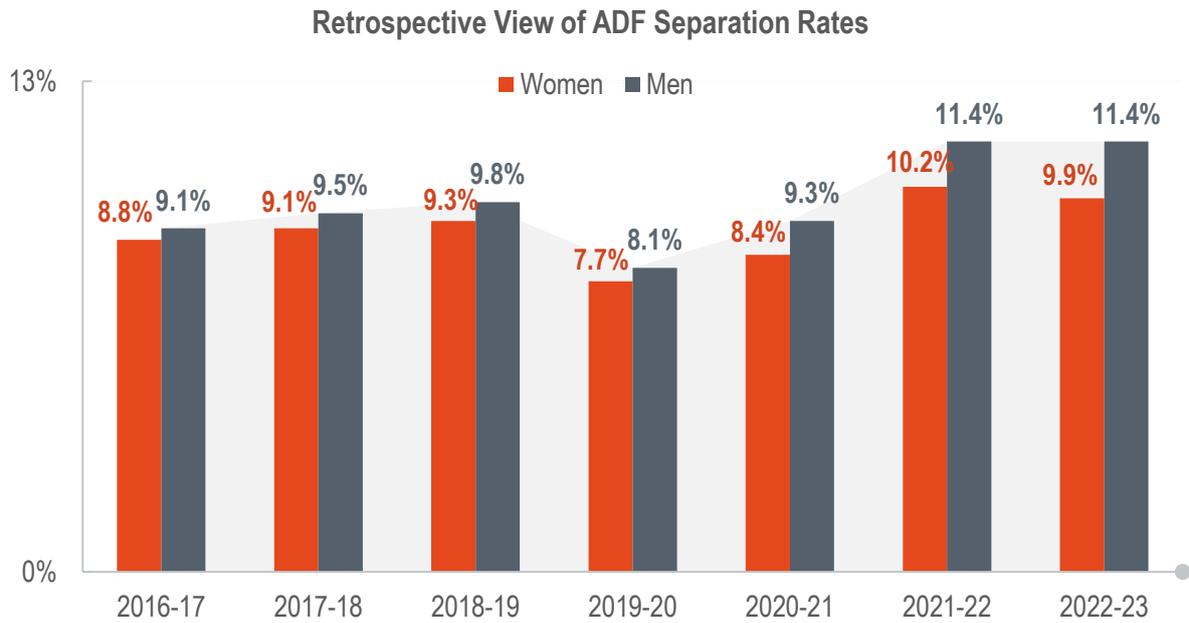
### Key Findings for KPI 5

**The evidence in 2022-23 suggests that one of the key drivers of retention for women is having the flexibility to manage family and/or caring responsibilities with an ADF career.**

- ADF men continue to have a higher separation rate than women across all Services. Women's separation rate has remained steady.
- Women's length of service across all services has increased in the last ten years.
- There are still gendered differences in the uptake of parental leave in the ADF.
- Retention of women post maternity leave is still quite low at the 5-year post maternity leave mark.
- In 2022-23, Navy had the highest proportion of women retained after a career break.

### Separation rate

ADF permanent force separation rate in 2022-23 was 11.1% with men having a higher separation rate (11.4%) than women (9.9%). Overall ADF men continue to have a higher separation rate than women across all Services. When compared to 2021-22 data the overall separation rate for women has remained steady (Figure 9).



**Figure 9: Total ADF Separation rates for women and men, 2016-17 to 2022-23.**

## Time in service when separating

Time in Service is measured by the median length of Service (years) at separation. Overall men continue to serve for longer than women. This has been the case since 2012. In 2022-23, men serve longer in Navy than in Air Force and Army (Figure 10).

Other Rank women continue to have lower median years of Service at separation when compared with past years. In 2022-23, Army Other Ranks women have the shortest Service time (5.7 years) compared with Other Ranks men (7.3 years). Navy officer women have the longest median years of service at separation (18.8 years) followed by Air Force Officers (14.7 years) then Army Officers (14 years). In 2022-23, women across all Services and ranks are serving longer compared to their median time in Service in 2021-22.

Although the gendered gap between women’s and men’s time in Service upon separation has narrowed since 2021-22, work still needs to be undertaken to continue fostering a sense of belonging and flexibility in how ADF personnel serve. As outlined in KPI 3, career management frameworks and middle management functions need to continue to focus on enabling flexibility in the way people work to enable a committed and flexible workforce to support the strategic directions outlined in the DSR. Driving a culture of flexibility will ensure both ADF men and women can continue to provide capability through service whilst managing other aspects of their lives.

Median Years in Service Upon Separation for 2021-22 and 2022-23

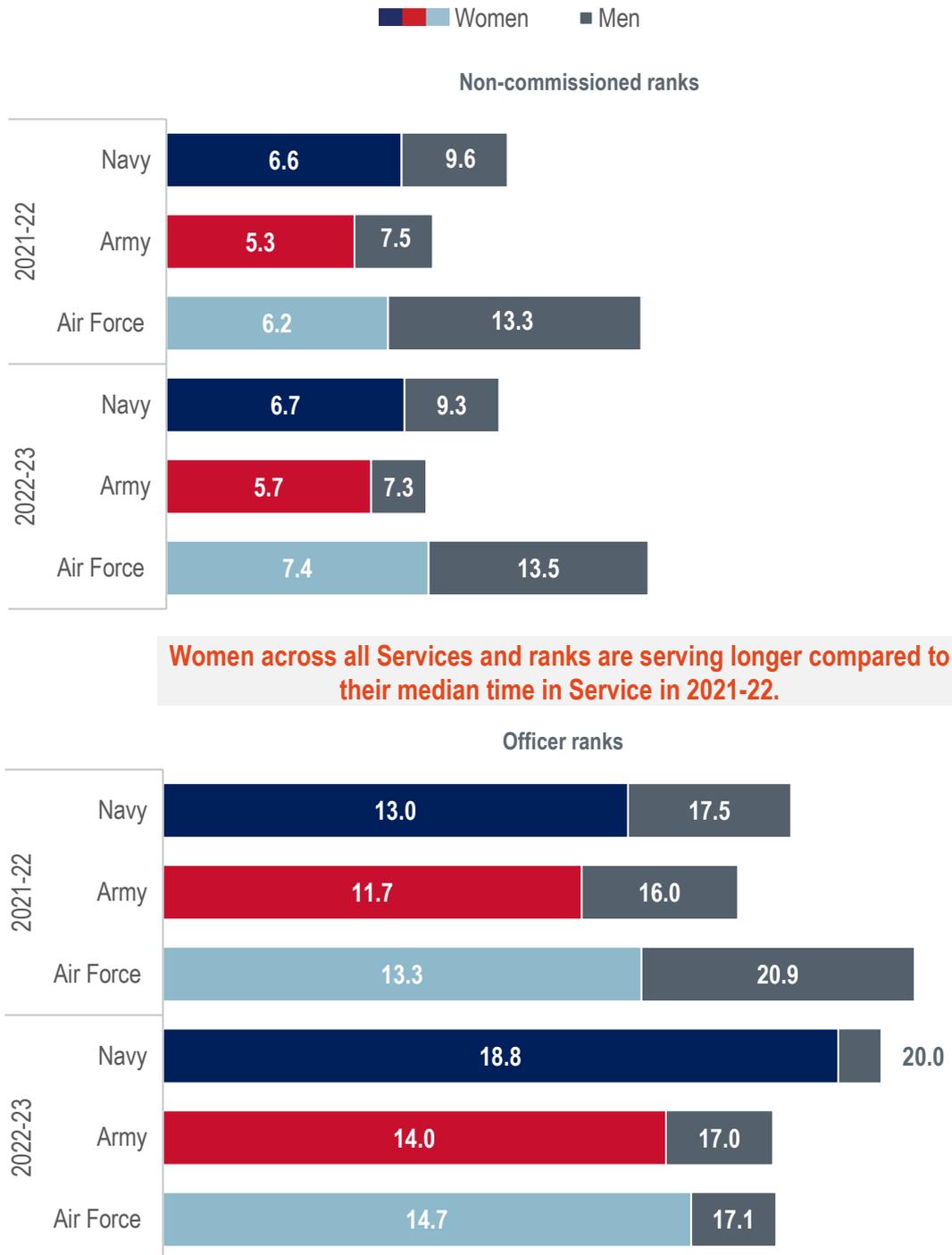


Figure 10: Median years in Service when members separate, by Service, rank group, and gender 2021-22 and 2022-23

## Use of maternity and parental leave

Defence's maternity provisions allow eligible ADF members to take an absence of 52 weeks including 18 weeks of paid maternity leave with the remaining absence taken as unpaid parental leave.<sup>28</sup> The entitlement of maternity leave is offered to ADF members who have carried a pregnancy and given birth to a child. 20 days of paid parental leave is offered to members who are not eligible for paid maternity leave.

In the general population, 92% of Australian employers offering access to employer funded parental leave make no distinction between genders taking that leave.<sup>29</sup> The gendered aspect of the ADF maternity leave policy continues to reinforce gendered norms and stereotypes that caring for children is only feminine. These gendered norms reduce the opportunity for participation in the workforce and limit opportunities for progression for women. Parental leave policies that are available to all genders can work to change these gendered norms and in turn increase the participation of women in the workforce and promote opportunities for progression.

In 2022-23, ADF women used a mix of paid and unpaid maternity leave and parental leave. Across all three services, women aged 30-34 are mostly likely to take a period of maternity leave. Nationally the average age of mothers is 31.1 with the highest proportion of mothers aged between 30 and 34 (more than one-third (38%) of all mothers)<sup>30</sup> which is consistent with the age at which maternity leave is taken by ADF women, albeit the proportions of women taking leave are lower than the national proportions of those giving birth.

In the general population, men are still less likely to take primary carer's leave when compared to women, this reflects entrenched gender norms that see women take on the majority of unpaid caring work. However, in the general population 2021-22 we saw an increase in men in management roles taking parental leave<sup>31</sup>. Very few ADF men (0.1%) took unpaid parental leave during 2022-23.

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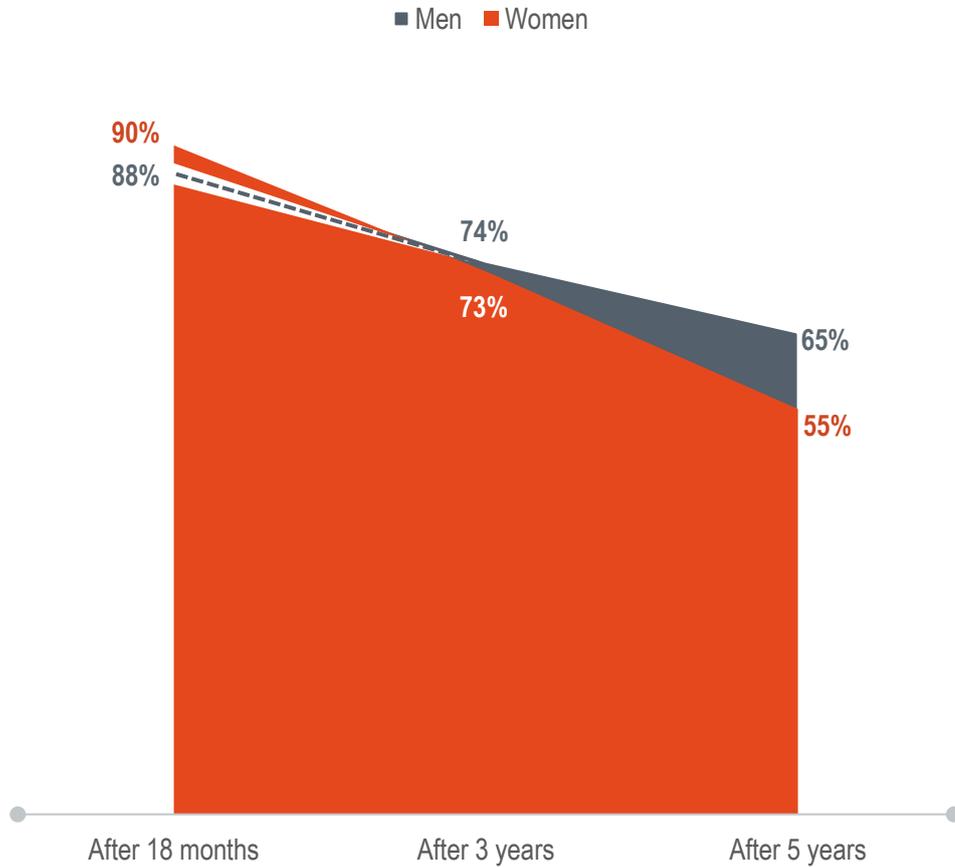
<sup>28</sup> ADF Pay and Conditions Manual. [Part 6: Maternity leave | Pay and Conditions \(defence.gov.au\)](#). September 7, 2023.

<sup>29</sup> Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2022). [WGEA Scorecard 2022: the state of gender equality in Australia](#). September 7, 2023.

<sup>30</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2023) [Australia's mothers and babies web report](#). September 7, 2023.

<sup>31</sup> Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2022). [WGEA Scorecard 2022: the state of gender equality in Australia](#). September 7, 2023.

### Retention in the five years after taking Maternity or Parental Leave



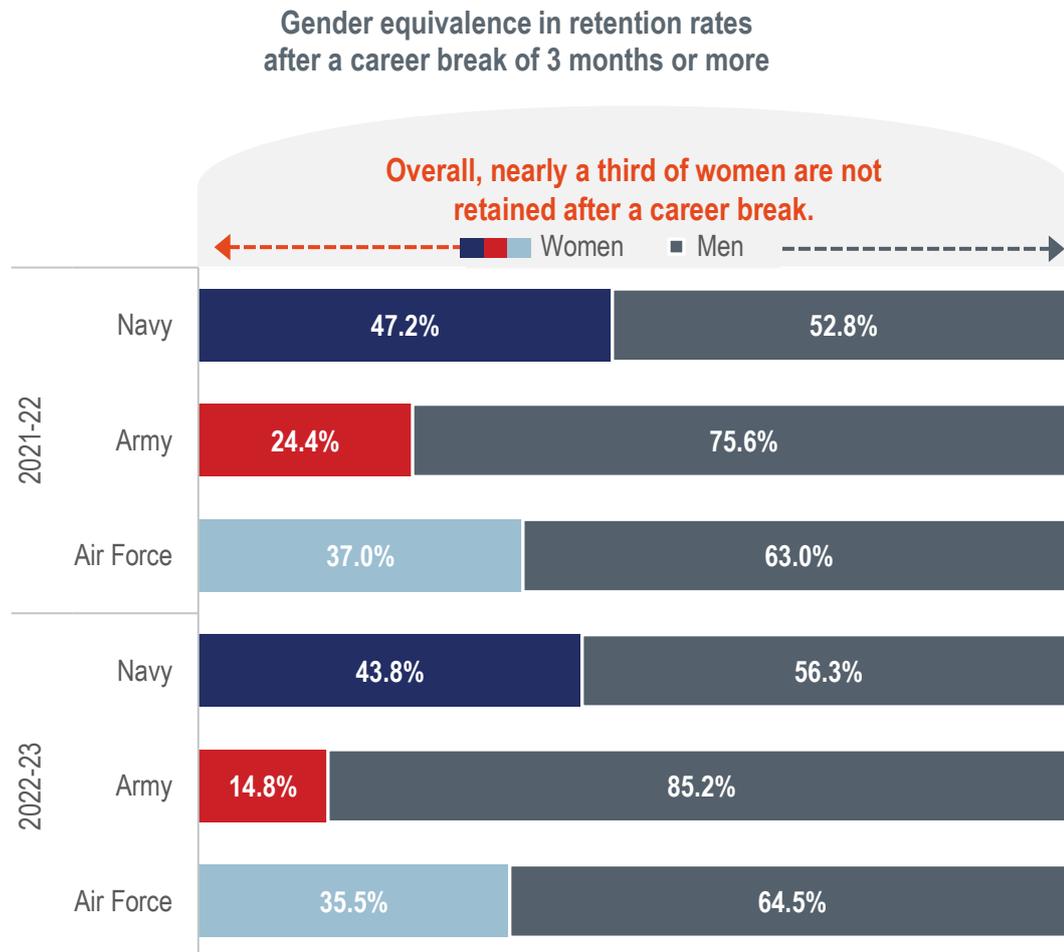
**Figure 11: Retention of women and men 18 months, 3 years and 5 years after taking maternity and/or parental leave, 2022-23.**

The impact of paid maternity and parental leave on retention of ADF women and men after 18 months, three years and five years of taking the leave continue to be similar across the three Services. Overall, Air Force continues to have a better retention rate for both women and men in the five years after taking either parental or maternity leave, with 56.4% of women retained after five years. 47.2% of Navy women will separate in the 5 years after taking maternity and/or parental leave closely followed by Army at 45.3%. Navy’s retention of women post maternity leave is greatest at the 18 month to three-year mark, then retention drops between the 3 and 5-year mark (down 21.5%). Army’s retention drops between the 18 month and 3-year mark with only 70.5% of women being retained at the 3-year mark, falling to 54.7% at the 5 years post maternity leave. Air Force retention across the three measurements is relatively consistent. Interestingly, more women than men are retained across all three services at the 18-month mark post parental/maternity leave (Figure 11).

Overall, the retention of ADF women post maternity leave is low at the 5-year post maternity leave mark. When compared with the median time in service data (Figures 10), it is unclear if this attributed to normal patterns of service. Further investigation is required to better understand the impact of parenting school aged children on ADF women’s career pathways as well as their retention rates post maternity leave.

## Career break

Retention of women and men in the ADF is not equal after they have taken a career break of 3 months or more.<sup>32</sup> Since 2021-22, the number of women retained after a career break has declined and the number of men retained has increased (Figure 12). In 2022-23, Navy had the highest proportion of women retained after a career break (43.8%), followed by Air Force (35.5%) and then Army (14.4%).



**Figure 12: Retention rates of ADF personnel after taking a career break of 3 months or more, by service and Gender, 2021-22 and 2022-23**

<sup>32</sup>Career break includes ADF members who took continuous period of leave for three months or longer and who remained in the Service for at least three months or more that includes long service leave, forces annual leave and leave without pay. Figures include Navy members who took a continuous period of leave for three months or longer during the period 1 July 2022-31 March 2023, and who remained in the Service for at least three months after returning from leave. Leave types include long service leave, forces annual leave, and leave without pay.

## Family needs: Members with Dependents and Childcare

In 2022-23, Defence assigned ADF members one of three categories to understand an ADF members' family responsibilities and support needs: Member with Dependants (MWD), Member with Dependants Unaccompanied (MWD(U)) and Member without Dependants (MWOD). These categories were based on Defence recognised relationships and dependants, and may not have reflected the ADF members actual self-reported relationships and responsibilities, or all family types. A recent review was conducted into how Defence categorises ADF members for the purposes of understanding their family responsibilities and needs. The results of this review saw an introduction of new categories which better reflect a more modern relationship and family structure. The changes were introduced on 1 July 2023 and therefore not in scope for this report.

In 2022-23, more men than women were categorised as MWD(U) and officers were more likely to be MWD(U) (Figure 13). Compared to 2021-22, there was minimal change in the number of men being unaccompanied but there was an increase in women Officers in Army (up 2.5%) and Air Force (up 3.4%) and Navy other rank women (up 3.6%) being categorised as MWD(U).<sup>33</sup> The top two reasons for MWD(U) categorisation were 'partner's employment' (71%) and 'education of children' (38%). 52% of those who were categorised as MWD(U) intended on remaining unaccompanied on posting.<sup>34</sup>

Proportion of ADF members with recognised relationships using MWD(U) arrangements in 2022-23

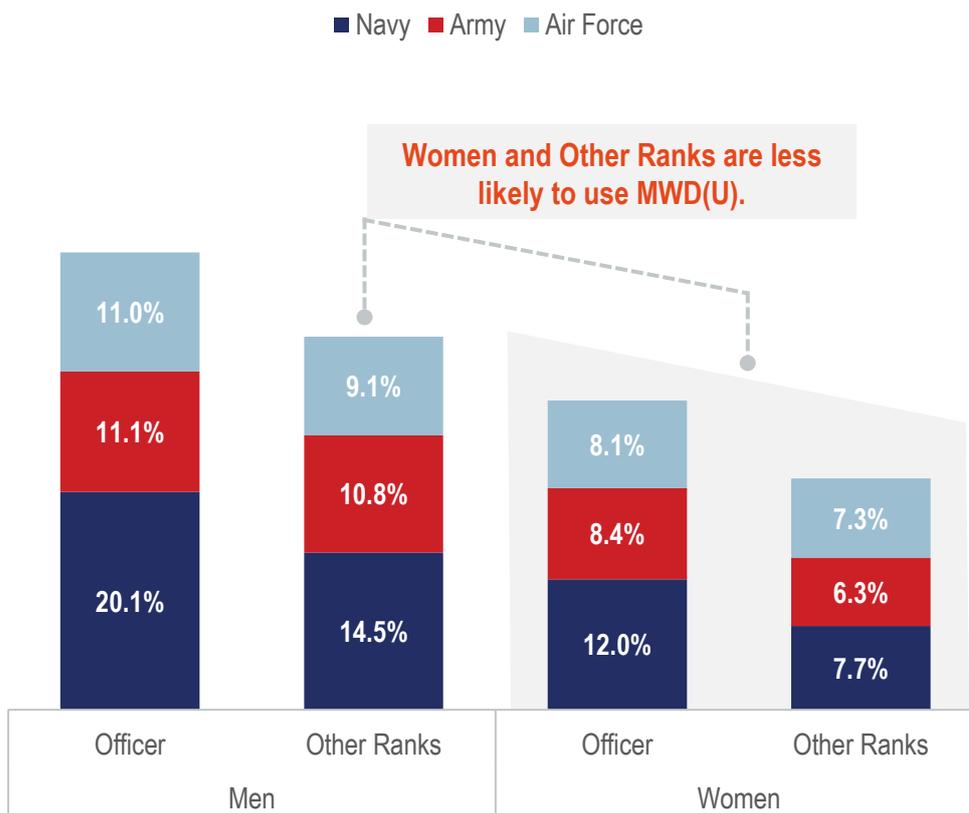


Figure 13: Distribution of Recognised Relationships using MDU (U) arrangements, 2022-2023

While there may be a range of factors that lead to the decision for the member to elect to be MWD(U), according to the 2022 ADF Families Survey for members the most common negative impacts reported were on partner and child relationships, ability to provide care to children and levels of social support. For members who are men that responded, a higher proportion recognised the negative impact on

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Defence (2019) [2019 Defence Census Report: Fact Sheet 9 – Members with Dependents](#). September 8, 2023.

partner employment compared to women respondents. According to the ADF Families Survey 2022 a higher proportion of women (49%) reported feeling they had made career sacrifices due to their partner's military career compared to 28% of men respondents.

Childcare continues to be an issue for ADF families and more specifically ADF Women. Where childcare is required, ADF women are substantially more likely to not be able to access the services they require.

The most recent data shows that, 54.3% of ADF members required childcare.<sup>35</sup> 43.5% were currently using childcare and 10.8% of personnel who required childcare were not currently using childcare or it was not available.

At the time of the 2023 Defence census<sup>36</sup>, only 57.7% of respondents stated that their childcare arrangements were fully meeting their needs. 34% of respondents stated that their childcare arrangements were partially meeting their needs and 8% stated that their childcare needs were not being met at all. Men who responded were far more likely to agree that their childcare needs were being fully met (45.6%) compared with women (11.8%).

Reasons for childcare needs not being met vary. 45.8% of members stated that childcare fees were not affordable and 27.5% stated that childcare places were not available. 26.7% of ADF members reported that the childcare services were not open early enough and 16.6% stated that the childcare services were not open late enough. Other reasons why childcare didn't meet the needs include childcare services not near home or work (15.8%) and salary packaging not available for childcare (15.4%)<sup>37</sup>.

Women with dependent children were far more likely than men to require childcare (73% of women compared with 53% of men) and were more likely to be currently using childcare (68% of women compared with 44% of men). OR/JNCO (62%) and Junior Officers (61%) were more likely to require childcare than senior officers and SNCO (both 46%).

Men with dependent children requiring childcare were more likely than women in the same situation to have a spouse or partner providing childcare (44% of men, compared with 28% of women). OR/JNCO (48%) and Junior Officers (45%) were more likely to use childcare centres.

*The most commonly used forms of childcare were:*

- Childcare centres (43%);
- Spouse/partner (41%);
- After-school care (32%);
- Before school care (25%); and
- Friends/family in an unpaid capacity (22%).

The Child Care Subsidy data report for the September Quarter 2022 reported an increase of 14% in the usage of Outside School Hours Care compared an increase of 0.7% use of childcare services.<sup>38</sup> A possible reason for this may be the cost of living pressures on families resulting in all adult caregivers in the family having to take up extra work of work longer hours. Future Women in ADF reports may expand the financial analysis and impact on service personnel caring for school-aged children.

The *2021-2022 Women in ADF Report* discussed the challenges of accessing childcare in the context of childcare deserts placing approximately 60% of Defence bases in a childcare desert. In the context of the Defence Strategic Review which states there is an enhanced need to posture the Defence Force in northern Australia and prop, access to high quality childcare for members and their families may become an increasingly greater challenge in these areas especially in the short to medium term. This may increasingly place pressure on families to make decisions about family or military separation.

<sup>35</sup> Defence (2023) 2023 Defence Census Preliminary Data, October 27, 2023.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Department of Education (2022) [Childcare subsidy data report – September Quarter 2022](#). September 8, 2023.

## KPI 6: Number of women recruited against service targets

Recruitment and retention are current concerns for ADF. Delivering the *Defence Strategic Review 2023* objectives will require ADF to invest in the growth and retention of a highly-skilled Defence workforce.<sup>39</sup> Recruiting a gender diverse workforce can be leveraged as a strategic enabler in an evolving strategic landscape.

Progress towards recruitment of women against Service targets is measured against the following sub-indicators:

- a. The number of women recruited at or above the number required to meet each Service's annual women's recruitment target.
- b. Use of targeting initiatives for attraction and recruitment.

KPI 6 in this report calls for a strategic effort across all services to continuously assess the current recruitment targets for women, as well as assessment of skills and technical trades to meet the specific gendered gaps in recruitment targets.

### Key Findings for KPI 6

**In 2022-23, the ADF met 49.8% of the recruitment target for women – 4.4% percentage point decline from 2021-22.**

- The proportion of women recruited into the individual services was 30.4% for Navy, 15.5% for Army and 32.1% for Air Force.
- Air Force was most successful at achieving women's Permanent Entry recruitment targets (60% met), followed by Army (40%) and Navy (29%).
- Officer entry recruitment of women continues to show promising results.
- Gap year recruitment targets for women in 2022-23 has declined slightly for all three Services: Air Force currently sits at 97%, followed by Navy at 96% and Army at 79%.

### Targets for women's recruitment

In 2022-23, the Services set a total recruitment target of 2,845 women across the Permanent and Reserve forces, against which 1,416 women were recruited. This represents a result of 49.8%, which is a 4.4% decrease from 2021-22. In 2022-23, women comprised 21.6% of overall recruitment. Of women recruited into the individual services (by all entry options) the distribution was 30.4% for Navy, 15.5% for Army and 32.1% for Air Force.

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<sup>39</sup> Australian Government (2023) [National Defence Strategic Review 2023](#). Department of Defence. September 05, 2023.

Overall, the actual number of women recruited into Army and Air Force permanent roles has slightly declined. This was not the case for Navy in 2022-23.

Figure 14 shows the percent of each Service’s success against their recruitment targets for women. For Permanent Entry overall, Air Force achieved the highest proportion of their target (60%), followed by Army (40%) and Navy (29%).

More women continue to be recruited against Officer Entry targets than General Entry across all three Services. Overall, Air Force is performing more strongly in achieving a higher proportion of women’s recruitment targets than Navy and Army for both Officer and General entry, followed by Army and then Navy. Air Force and Army show steady growth in meeting the recruitment targets for Officer and General Entry. Navy shows a slight decline in achieving their recruitment targets for both Officer and General Entry in 2022-23.

Gap year recruitment targets for women in 2022-23 has declined slightly for all three Services: Air Force currently sits at 97%, followed by Navy at 96% and Army at 79%.

While each of the Services continue to meet their recruitment goals to increase diversity in the ADF workforce, concerns remain that the recruiting landscape could become more competitive in the near future. It is important to understand the key barriers and challenges in attracting talent into the ADF and how these barriers might impact the ADF’s ability to achieve gender targets for recruitment.

### Propensity to Serve

Understanding the propensity to serve in the ADF, particularly among younger Australians, provides an indication of the pipeline of Australians looking to enter into service. The *Defence Workforce Outlook Report (2022)* highlighted that the overall propensity to serve increased steadily among 15–24-year-old men between 2017 and 2021 before declining, increasing from 41% in 2017 to 54% in 2021.<sup>40</sup> Between 2021 and 2022 the propensity to serve amongst men in the same age cohort declined to 48%.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, the propensity among women in the same age cohort has remained relatively stable since 2017, where propensity was 30%. Since then, propensity has slightly dropped, before reaching 27% in 2022.<sup>42</sup>

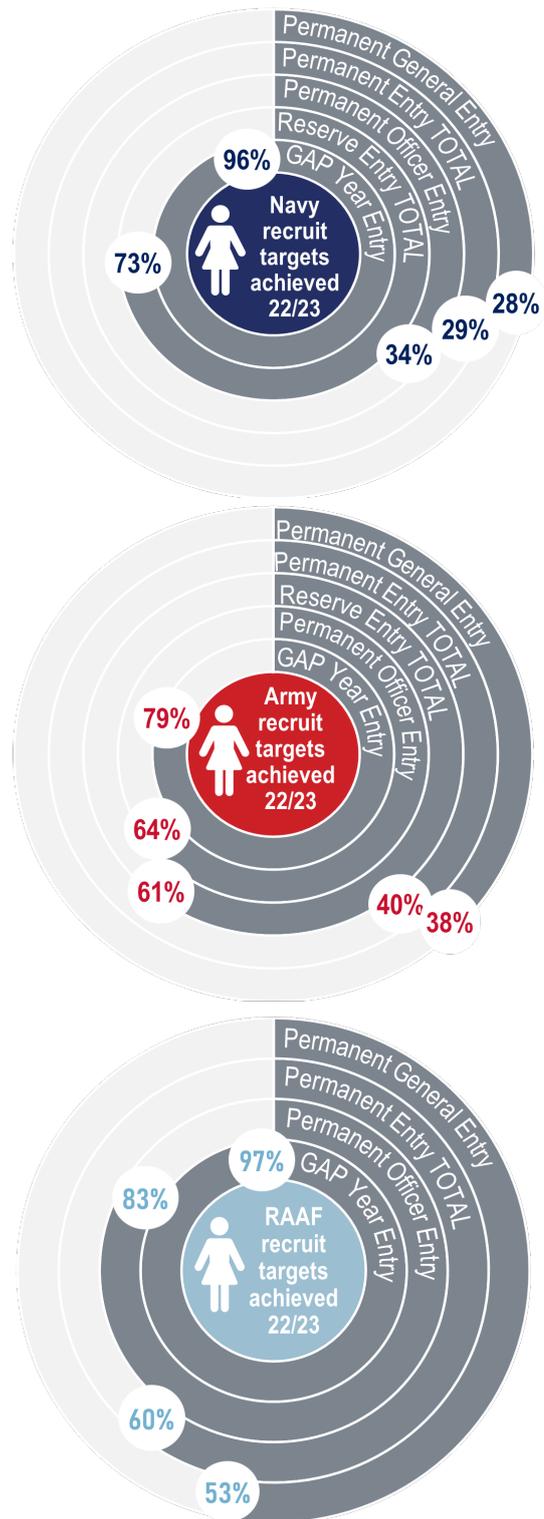


Figure 14: Percentage of women’s recruitment targets met by Service and entry pathway 22-23

<sup>40</sup> Department of Defence (2022) [Workforce Outlook 2022: Economic and Employment Outlook](#). Directorate of People Intelligence and Research. Defence. September 05, 2023.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.



The declining propensity to serve amongst women over time may cause recruitment issues in achieving the gender diversity targets for each of the Services. A market study conducted by Hall & Partners for Defence Force Recruiting (2022) highlighted that interest in Services among Australians aged 15-24 years is highest for the Air Force (40%), followed by the Army (36%) and Navy (34%).<sup>43</sup> Given the new recruiting services context, the Defence Force Recruiting (DFR) are adapting their existing recruitment strategies to navigate the recruiting landscape and ensure they are able to attract women in critical skill segments in sufficient numbers.

## Service initiatives to attract and recruit women

The ADF competes with various civilian employers to meet workforce capability. The extent of this competition often varies by Service or military occupation. To maximise ADF's ability to compete with other employers, DFR has various incentives to enhance the quality of its offer to potential recruits in 2022-23.

Defence Force Recruiting advertising is intended to create mass outreach and awareness of the ADF amongst 15–35-year-old women using a mix of Tri-Service Do What You Love (DWYL) brand assets across broadcast channels. The new advertising campaign is focused on promoting the ADF as an attractive and attainable career option for women by addressing latent misconceptions and barriers. During the Oct-Dec 2022 quarter, the DWYL campaign recognition remained stable at 52%, however propensity increased by 9% post-exposure to the campaign.

Also in the 2022-23 reporting period, DFR initiated a women's content refresh project. The task was to design an approach to woman-targeted content that would: (1) increase the appeal of a career in the ADF; (2) fill the existing knowledge gaps and (3) support women during the recruitment process. A range of research was undertaken to understand what the current barriers were for women when considering a career in the ADF.

To ensure the ADF workforce reflects the diverse community it serves, the ADF recruitment framework is now aimed at improving the eligibility pool of potential applicants that aligns with service recruitment requirements to military employment, particularly in key technical and specialist trades.<sup>44</sup> These investments in people are important to ensure that Defence meets its workforce growth goals and maintains the highly skilled workforce needed to keep Australians safe.

To meet the workforce growth goals, Services will need to address some of the structural and perceived barriers that continue to hamper the recruitment of women.

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<sup>43</sup> Hall & Partners (2022) *Defence force recruiting communications tracking*. Cited in Department of Defence (2022) [Workforce Outlook 2022: Economic and Employment Outlook](#). Directorate of People Intelligence and Research. Defence. September 05, 2023.

<sup>44</sup> The Australian Government (2023) [2023-2027 Defence Corporate Plan](#). Department of Defence.

## KPI 7: Completion rates for initial-entry training are equal between women and men

Completion rates for initial entry training are monitored to assess where there are differences. This KPI is measured through a direct comparison of completion rates.

### Key Findings for KPI 7

**Compared to 2021-22, there are still no gendered differences in Initial Entry Training completion.**

- In 2022-23, women have comparable completion rates to men across the Services.

### Initial Officer and Other Rank training completion rates and ADFA

Women have comparable completion rates to men across the Services for Initial Entry Officer Training in 2022-23 (Figure 15). For Navy and Air Force, women have a slightly higher completion rate than men. Women across the Services tend to have a slightly higher completion rates for Initial Entry Other Ranks training, except for Air Force. In 2022-23, men in Air Force have 4 percentage point higher Other Rank IET completion rate than women. ADFA completion rates in 2022-23 for women in comparison to men is highest for Navy. For Army and Air Force, men have a slightly higher ADFA completion rate in 2022-23, 2% and 6% percentage points respectively.

ADF education completion rates for women is consistent with national ABS data on educational participation and attainment of women and men. In Australia in 2022, women aged 15-74 years had a slightly higher attainment of a bachelor's degree or above (35.2%) than men (28.8%).<sup>45</sup> There were a higher proportion of women aged 15-74 years (21%) than men (16%) who were currently studying for a non-school qualification (including, a certificate, diploma or degree). Women represented 60% of all domestic university completions in 2020.<sup>46</sup>

Attracting a greater share of highly skilled and qualified women would help address specific skill shortages critical occupational groups and categories whilst achieving more gender diverse workforce.

As part of their initial entry training requirements, recruits must also meet the required entry standards prior to commencing recruit training that ensures they have the capacity to do the work and do it safely. Fitness standards present ongoing challenges in recruiting women into the ADF. Internal research conducted by the Services suggested continued reform efforts by each of the Services to revise their pre-entry fitness requirements in late 2021. This has seen an increase of 15% more women passing the pre-entry fitness test. *The fitness revisions included:*

- Navy removing the push up component for entry (except for Navy Divers), and introducing a choice of four cardio components with age-appropriate fitness standards.
- Army introducing an amended fitness standard for all non-combat corps candidates.
- Air Force removing the push-up component for entry (except for Ground Defence Officers and Physical Training Instructors).

<sup>45</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022) [Key Social and Economic Gender Indicators: Education](#). September 05, 2023.

<sup>46</sup> Department of Defence (2022) [Workforce Outlook 2022: Economic and Employment Outlook](#). Directorate of People Intelligence and Research. Defence. September 05, 2023.

Gender equivalence and percentage of initial entry and ADFA intake training completion as of 2022-23

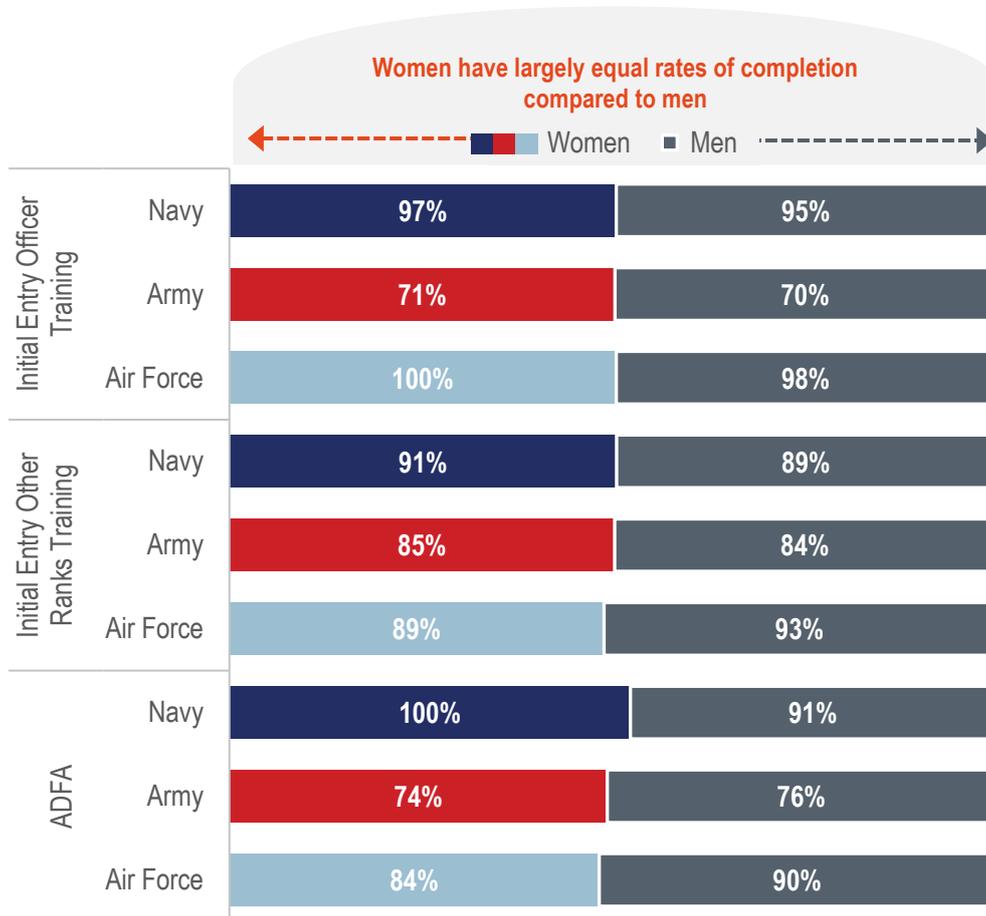


Figure 15: Proportion of women’s and men’s initial entry training completion rates, by Service and Ranks, 2022-23

## KPI 8: Women are retained in the recruiting pipeline at a similar rate to men

Progress towards retention of women in the recruiting pipeline at a similar rate to men is measured by the following sub-indicators:

- Similar conversion ratios for women and men from the Online Aptitude Test (OAT) to Enlistment (i.e., the number of women and men who complete an OAT for one enlistee).
- Proportion of women enlistments in each Service for General Entry and non-Technical.
- Proportional numbers of women and men with prior Service are enlisting in the ADF.

### Key Findings for KPI 8

**In 2022-23, the proportion of women enlisting continue to be lower than men.**

- Women continue to have poorer conversion ratios than men – on average 1 in 7 women and 1 in 5 men enlist after an OAT.
- The proportion of women enlisting in technical and non-technical roles is still lower than men.
- Women's representation in non-technical enlistment continues to be higher than in technical enlistment.
- Enlistment of women into Army technical roles shows a 3.1 percentage point increase since 2021-22 – slightly higher than Air Force and Navy.
- Women represent 28.8% of those who enlist into the Permanent Service with prior Service (including re-enlistment, Service transfers, and reserve transfers).

### Conversion ratios from YOU to Enlistment

Candidates processed by Defence Force Recruiting (DFR) conduct an Online Aptitude Test (OAT) remotely, before either physically attending a face-to-face Careers Coach Interview (CCIV) at a DFR Centre or conducting such a session over the phone.<sup>47</sup> In previous years, candidates were more likely to attend an in-person Your Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) session, which included conduct of the OAT and CCIV in centre. To reflect this change, KPI progress is now measured against enlistment conversion following OAT rather than YOU sessions.

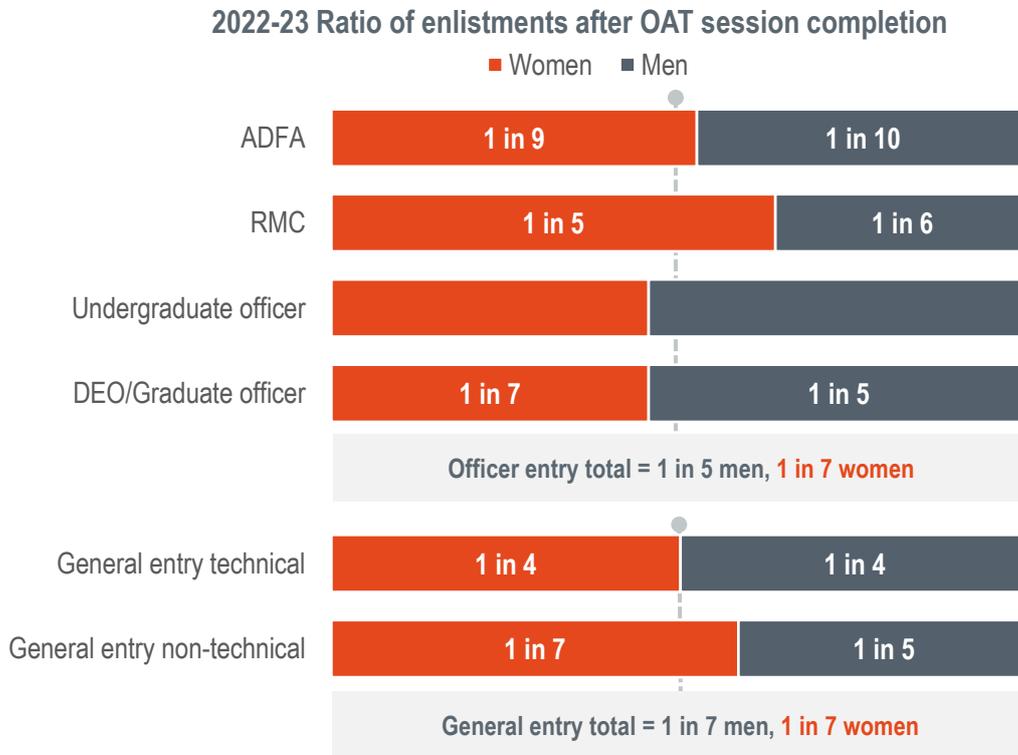
For every one ADF enlistee in 2022-23, the number of OAT session attendees are shown in Figure 16. Conversion ratios from OAT to enlistment measure the number of candidates who complete an OAT for every one enlistee. There are some gender differences across conversion ratios. Women and men are retained at different rates dependent on Service and job role. Women generally have a lower conversion rates than men. On average 1 in 7 women and 1 in 5 men are converted to enlistment after attending a YOU session.

In 2022-23, the conversion rate for ADFA and RMC were slightly lower for women than men. The conversion rate for women's Officer Entry is also lower than men's, but for General Entry women and men have similar conversion rates. There are some gender differences in the conversion ratios for women and men across the Services. Navy has the best conversion rate for women (1 in 6 women) and Army has the lowest (1 in 8 women). For Air Force, conversion ratios for women and men are comparable (1 in 7).

Not all candidates who attend a CCIV subsequently enlist. High conversion levels can reflect factors such as effective marketing campaigns for specific employment categories, roles which provide qualification-based training that directly transfer to civilian workplaces, and seasonal effects. Low rates can reflect unpopular employment categories, a smaller than average candidate pipeline, and/or more

<sup>47</sup> More information about the ADF recruitment process is available at [ADF Careers - Recruitment Process](#).

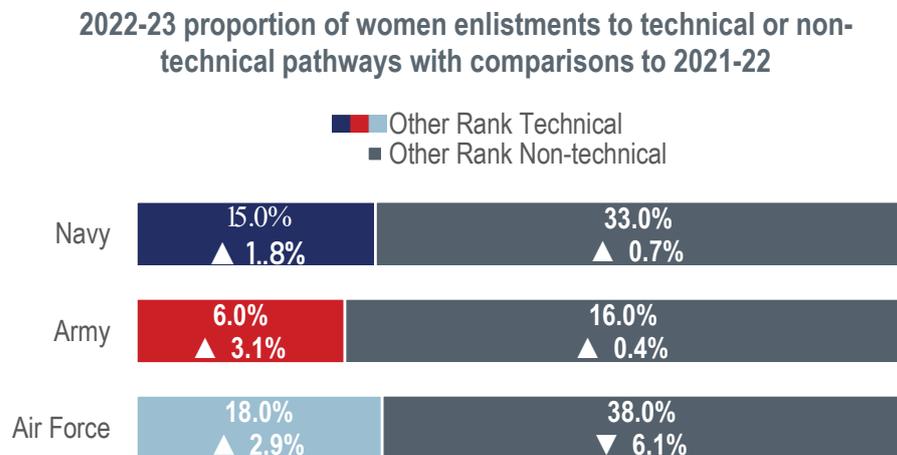
complex entry standards or processes (e.g. credentialing, specialist medical screening). Factors that may contribute to the loss of women in the conversion process can include their ability, real or perceived, to meet role-specific entry standards.



**Figure 16: Equivalence of conversion ratios by gender from OAT to enlistment**

### Enlistment into ADF Permanent Force

Overall, women’s representation in both technical and non-technical enlistments across all services has increased in 2022-23, except for Air Force non-technical enlistment. Women’s representation in non-technical enlistment continues to be higher than in technical enlistment. Although the proportion of women enlisting in technical roles across all Services show a steady increase since 2021-22. The proportion of women enlisting in Air Force technical and non-technical roles continues to be higher, followed by Navy and then Army (Figure 17).



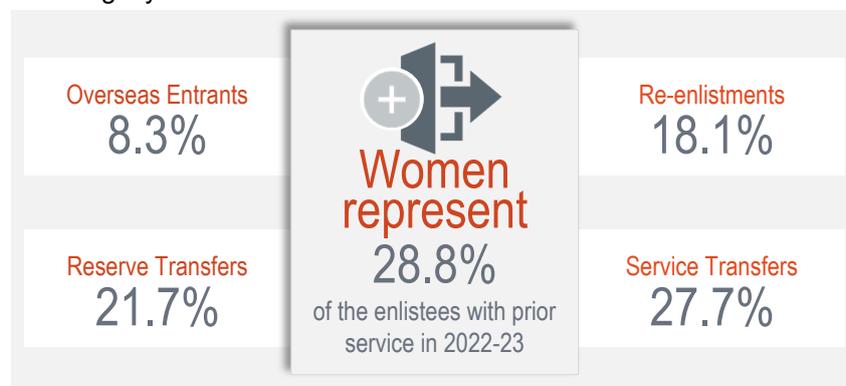
**Figure 17: Enlistment of women into the ADF permanent force in Other Rank technical and non-technical roles, 2021-22 and 2022-23**

Army has the lowest proportion of women enlisting into technical and non-technical roles. However, enlistment of women into Army technical roles shows a 3.1 percentage point increase since 2021-22 – slightly higher than Air Force and Navy.

The proportion of women enlisting into Officer roles are still lower than men across all Services. When compared to the proportion of women enlisting through General Entry (technical and non-technical), fewer women enlist into Officer roles. In 2022-23, the percentage of women enlisting in Officer roles has slightly increased for Navy (29%), but declined for Army (19%) and Air Force (29%).

## Prior Service Enlistment

The representation of women entering the ADF with prior Service is still lower than men (Figure 18). Of those with prior experience joining the Permanent Service, 28.8% were women (156 women in total). This includes overseas recruitment (2 women), re-enlistment (23 women), Service transfer (40 women) and transfers from Reserves (91 women). Since 2021-22, the representation of women as overseas entrants has declined by 10.1 percentage points, while proportion of women Reserve transfers has increased from 20.7% in 2021-22 to 27.7% in 2022-23. The representation of women in Service transfers has slightly increased since 2021-22.



**Figure 18: Proportion of women with prior service enlistments, 2022-23**

Noting the projected workforce growth of an additional 18,500 personnel by 2040, Defence will need to remain competitive in attracting and retaining a highly skilled diverse workforce by creating a modernised recruitment system that reflects contemporary employee value propositions. Working closely with a new recruiting capability partner, Defence is committed to modernising recruiting system that introduces new practices to increase recruitment volume, decrease application processing times and provide a positive candidate experience to all who choose the path of an ADF career.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> The Australian Government (2023) [2023-2027 Defence Corporate Plan](#). Department of Defence. September 05, 2023.

## KPI 9: Women transfer to the reserves and use reserve and Total Workforce System options at a similar rate to men

The Defence Strategic Review (DSR) highlights that the ADF Reserves is a key component of the workforce and the need for Total Workforce System to improve use of the reserve workforce to offer more flexibility in service.<sup>49</sup>

Progress towards transition and re-engagement of women and men in the ADF is measured against the following sub-indicators:

- a. Equal proportion of women and men transfer to the Reserves.
- b. Equal proportion of women and men transfer to the Reserves and continue to provide Service to the ADF after transition from the Permanent Force.
- c. Equal use of SERCAT 6 by women and men.

The first two sub-indicators are a function of representation in the Services and experience during Service. The third indicator is related to cultural attitudes around parental leave and flexible work being valued and having value to the workforce. Defence needs to understand how best to use the skills of individuals using flexible working patterns. Education, awareness and upskilling of managers across the enterprise is warranted to address persistent cultural challenges by promoting inclusiveness and acceptance.

### Key Findings for KPI 9

**The TWS has notably improved the use of the reserve workforce since its introduction in 2016. However, cultural challenges on inclusiveness and acceptance of part-time workforce persist.**

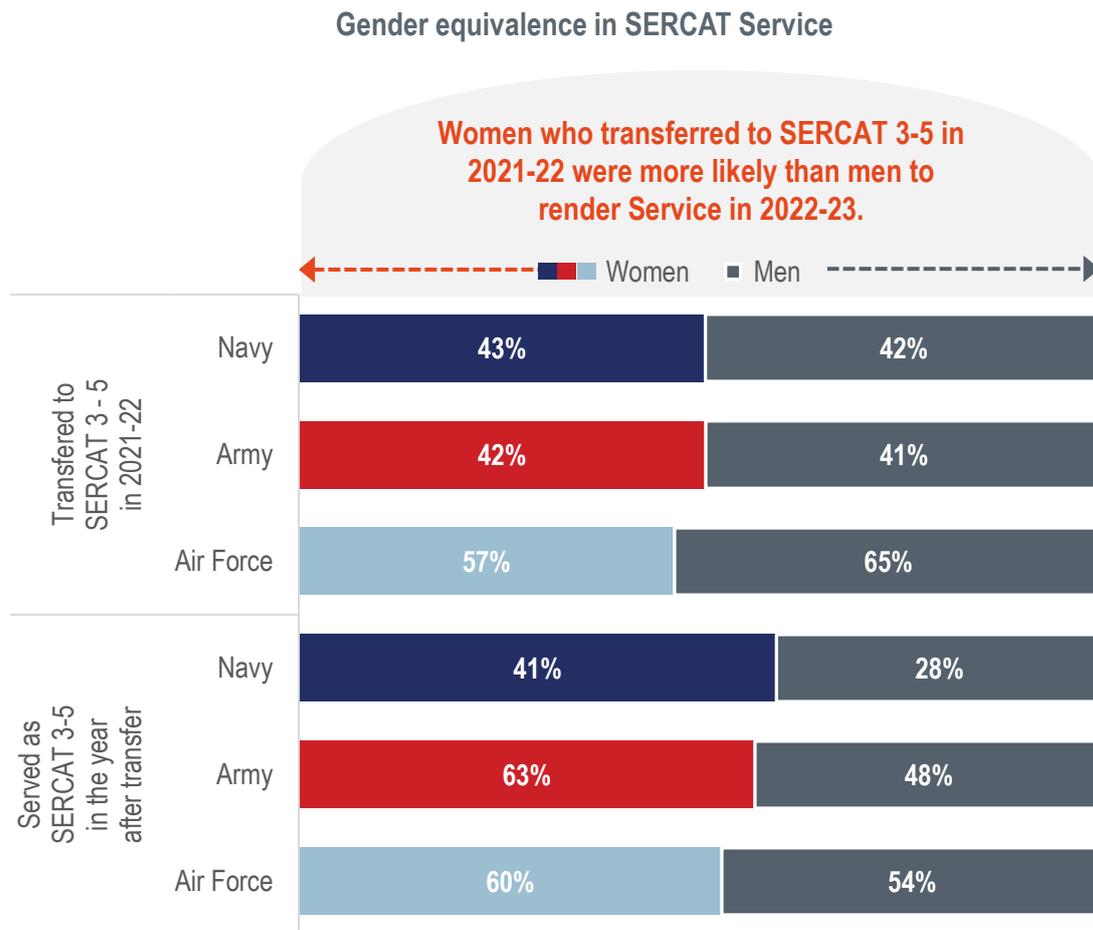
- There are gendered differences in the type of flexible work and reserve work undertaken.
- Uptake of SERCAT 6 continues to be used predominantly by women.
- Army SERCAT 3-5 women serve at a higher rate to the Permanent Force.
- Navy and Air Force and women serve in the SERCAT 3-5 at a far lower proportion than their Service in the Permanent Force.

### Transfer to Reserves

The ADF Total Workforce System (TWS) was introduced in 2016 to deliver a Service Spectrum designed to contribute to capability that offered Defence the strategic flexibility to manage the workforce in a range of full-time and part-time service arrangements. The intent was to encourage ADF members to make the ADF a longer term career by affording them more flexibility in the way they serve.

In 2021-22, almost equal proportions of women and men from Navy and Army transferred to SERCAT 3-5, and slightly more men than women for Air Force. Women who transferred to SERCAT 3-5 in 2021-22, were more likely to render service than men in 2022-23 (Figure 19). A higher proportion of Army women served as SERCAT 3-5 in 2022-23 after transferring to SERCAT 3-5 in 2021-22, followed by Air Force women and then Navy women.

<sup>49</sup> [Defence Strategic Review 2023](#). The Australian Government. September 08, 2023.



**Figure 19: Proportion of women who transfer to SERCAT 3-5 and served as SERCAT 3-5, by Service and Gender, 2022-23**

Consistent with broader national workforce challenges, focus should be on the growth and retention of highly skilled women and men who transferred to SERCAT 3-5 to continue rendering service.

## Reserve Service

The proportion of women rendering service in SERCAT 3-5 has remained steady since 2021-22. As shown in Table 7, Navy women serve in SERCAT 3-5 at a slightly lower proportion than their participation in the Permanent Force. Similarly, Air Force women serve in the SERCAT 3-5 at a far lower proportion than their Service in the Permanent Force. Army SERCAT 3-5 women serve at a higher rate to the Permanent Force.

**Table 7: Reserve Service by Gender and Service 2022-23**

	Navy		Army		Air Force	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Reserve (SERCAT 3-5)</b>	1,073	3,533	3,408	17,633	1,430	4,4970
	<i>Total (4,606)</i>		<i>Total (21,041)</i>		<i>Total (6,400)</i>	
<b>Women as % of Permanent Service</b>	24.0%		15.3%		26.5%	
<b>Women as % of Active Reserve Service</b>	23.3% ▼		16.2% ▲		22.3% ▼	

▲ Greater than Service representation in Permanent Force

▼ Less than Service representation in Permanent Force

## Use of SERCAT 6

As illustrated in Figure 20, SERCAT 6 (Permanent Force but rendering a pattern of Service other than full-time) continues to be a category predominantly used by women (3.6% compared to 0.2% of men). In 2022-23, the proportion of women using SERCAT 6 has slightly increased. As discussed in KPI 3 (increased acceptance of flexible work), cultural factors continue to influence low uptake of options such as SERCAT 6.

In 2022-23, there are still gendered differences in the type of flexible work undertaken. Men’s uptake of flexible work options is greatest for the categories of variable work hours and home located work in older age brackets and for both Officers and Other Ranks across all services. Navy had three times as many Officer men as women in the 50 to 64 age bracket using these flexible work options (Other Ranks: four times as many men as women). In 2022-23, there was only a single Navy Other Rank member using SERCAT 6 as opposed to 170 Navy Other Rank members on variable work hours.<sup>50</sup>

Similarly, for Army there was only a single Other Rank member using SERCAT 6 when compared to 125 Army Other Rank members on variable work hours. Army had almost eight times as many Officer men as women in the 50 to 64 age bracket using flexible work options (Other Ranks: twice as many men as women). Air Force had almost two times as many Officer men than women using variable hours or home-located work in the 50-64 age bracket. For Other Ranks almost three times as many men took up these options compared with women.

Flexibility is imperative for many ADF members and a lack of flexible work options – either real or perceived – might pose a serious impediment to retention of women. Earlier discussion on retention also highlighted that there is an increased propensity for women to leave the ADF at points in their lifecycle that coincide with a typical point where members, particularly women, are starting to have families. A member’s experience and uptake of flexible work options is highly dependent on the knowledge and skills of supervisors and Commanding Officers to effectively implement and manage flexibility in delivering Defence capability.

Whilst the Total Workforce System has improved the use of the reserve workforce since its introduction in 2016, cultural challenges on inclusiveness and acceptance of part-time workforce persists. In the light of current strategic circumstances, it is important to view the recruitment and retention of women through a strategic workforce lens and the contribution to capability provided by SERCAT 3-5 members and SERCAT 6 members (mostly women). The ADF Reserves not only complements the total Defence workforce but also provides the expansion base for the ADF to realise and sustain the long-term workforce requirements of the Defence Strategic Review. The ADF will need to align with changing demographic and contemporary gender expectations around flexibility of military service within the SERCAT 3 to 5 workforce.

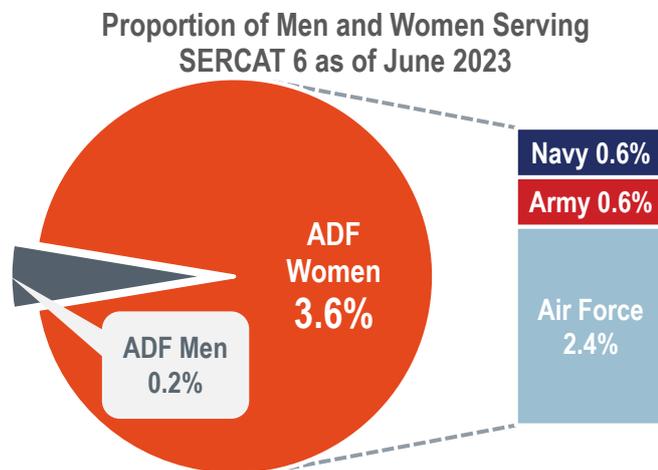


Figure 20: Proportion of men and women Serving SERCAT 6 as of June 2022

<sup>50</sup> Variable working hours is when a ADF member changes the way you work the standard hours to fit in with one’s schedule.

## KPI 10: Women are represented proportionally in postings and deployments

Defence remains committed to increasing the representation of women across all rank groups and workforce segments through deployment of more women on exercises, operations, humanitarian and disaster response missions and their appointment to key command and representational roles as directed by government to achieve Defence's strategic objectives.

Progress towards proportional representation of women in postings and deployments is measured against the following sub-indicators:

- a. Women are equally posted to command appointments;
- b. Equal posting to non-operational overseas posting.
- c. Women are equally deployed on operations.

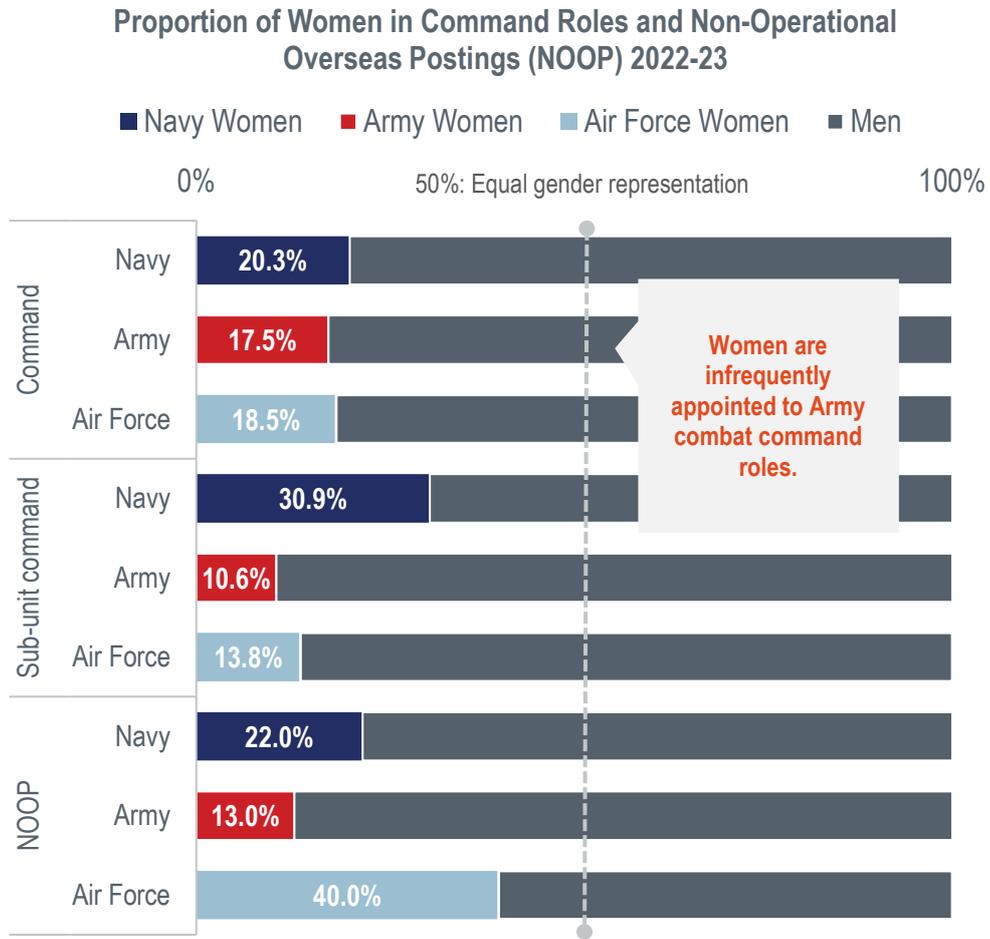
### Key Findings for KPI 10

**Overall proportional equality is yet to be achieved for women in postings and deployments.**

- The representation of women across Services in deployed roles at command and sub-command roughly reflects the participation rate of women in each of the Services.
- In 2022-23, women represented 18.3% of total 6,168 personnel deployed across 29 operations.
- The proportion of women deployed is consistent with their proportional representation across the eight workforce segments.

### Command Appointments

Gender parity is yet to be achieved in the proportion of women in command, sub-command roles, and Non-Operational Overseas Postings (NOOP) (Figure 21). However, the representation of women across Services in deployed roles at command and sub-command roughly reflects the participation rate of women in each of the Services. The representation of women in command roles across the Services are comparable— the proportion of Navy women is slightly higher than the proportion of women from Army and Air Force. The proportion of Army women in command roles is slightly higher than their service participation rate of 15.3%. Navy has the highest proportion of women in sub-command roles than Army and Air Force which situates them well for pipeline to command positions. Overall, Army has the lowest proportion of women in command, sub-command and NOOP postings. Women in Army combat roles are yet to be represented in command roles. In 2022-23, NOOP out of representational roles across Services were: Navy (41), Army (46) and Air Force (30). Out of the total Representational (Attachés, Assistant Attachés and Attachés Administration) roles, only Air Force women were deployed in Non-Operational and Overseas postings at almost gender parity with men (40% of roles). Navy and Army posted women to these roles at a far lower rate than their participation in their Service (2% and 2.3% percentage points lower respectively).



**Figure 21: Proportion of women in command, sub-command and Non-Operational Overseas Postings**

### Women on Deployment

In 2022-23, women represented 18.3% of total 6,168 personnel deployed across 29 operations (see Figure 22) compared to women’s participation rate in the workforce that sits at 20.4%.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Source: Defence Human Resource Data Warehouse.

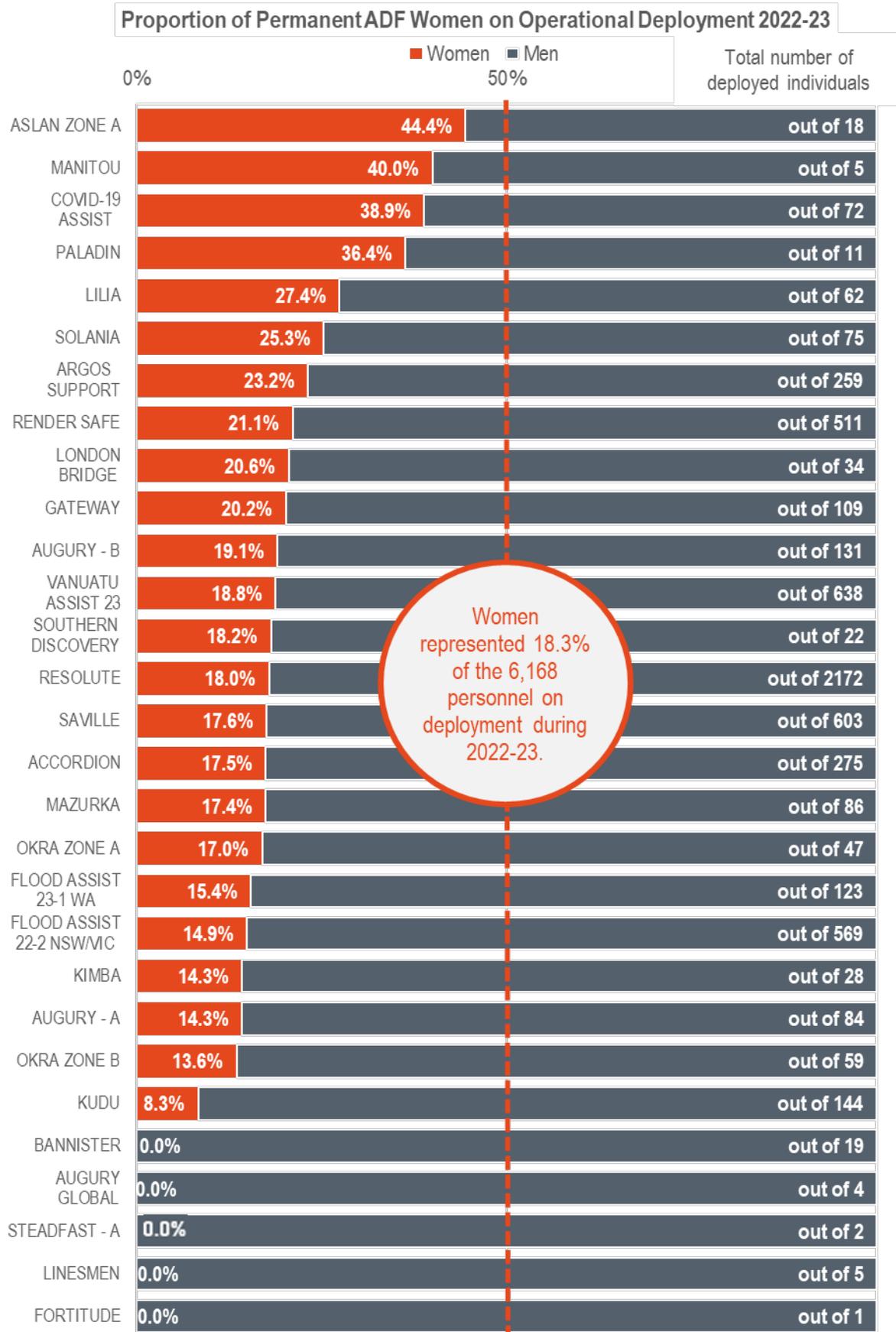


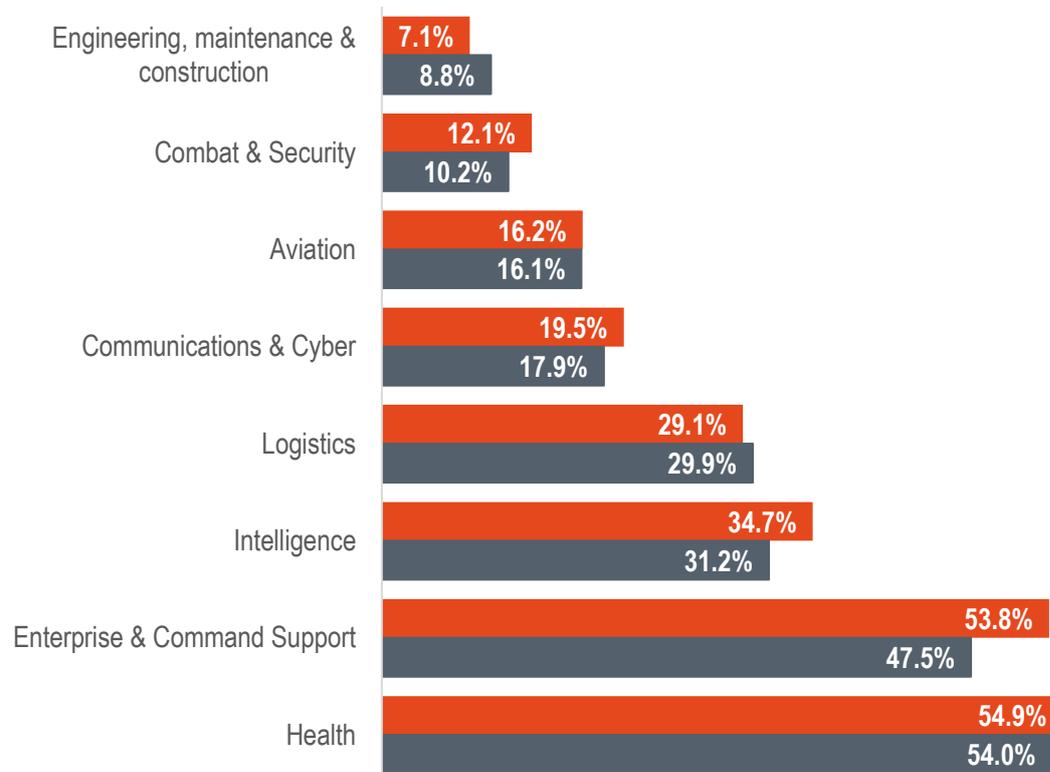
Figure 22: Proportion of ADF women on Deployment, 2022-23

## Women’s Deployment in Workforce Segments

Women are deployed at a rate almost equal or higher to their proportionate participation in the workforce segments (Figure 23)<sup>52</sup>. This highlights that the proportion of women deployed across the eight workforce segments is consistent with occupational gender-segregation in the ADF. For the workforce segments Combat and Security, Communications and Cyber, Intelligence, Enterprise & Command Support and Health, the proportion of women deployed in 2022-23 is slightly higher than their proportionate participation in that workforce segment group. More women are being deployed but occupational gender-segregation persists in a few workforce segments such as, Engineering, maintenance and construction, Combat and Security, Aviation and Communications and Cyber. This confirms that removal of formal barriers on combat exclusion does not necessarily result in achieving critical mass of women across all occupational groups.

**Women on deployment by category in 2022-23**

■ Proportion of the deployed category represented by Women ■ Proportion of Women in the Category



**Figure 23: Proportion of women deployed by workforce segments, 2022-23**

<sup>52</sup> Source: Defence Human Resource Data Warehouse.

## Gender Peace and Security

Defence remains committed to Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and to whole-of government commitment to delivering outcomes set out in Australia's long term strategy. These promote gender equality and meaningful participation of women and girls in peace and security processes as outlined in the second National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS 2021-2031. Gender, Peace and Security (GPS) Directorate within the Joint Capabilities Group is responsible for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (USSCR) 1325 WPS Agenda across the breadth of Defence planning, operations and international engagement.<sup>53</sup> In addition to coordinating Defence's implementation plans, the GPS Directorate is responsible for specialist gender-sensitive training guided by WPS principles and approaches for military Gender Focal Points and Gender Advisors (GENADs and GFPs). The Gender Advisor capability comprises Gender Advisors who are engaged on operational deployments, exercises and related activities, with the Australian Defence Force continuing to train and support Gender Focal Points to assist command teams in implementing the Gender, Peace and Security Mandate.<sup>54</sup>

The deployment of Gender Advisors and Gender Focal Points (GENADs and GFPs) on Australian Defence Force operations, exercises and planning groups is critical for the achievement of strategic military objectives and operational outcomes, and for ensuring the safety and security for women and girls. As at 30 June 2023, there were 332 active serving Gender Advisors and 990 active serving Gender Focal Points.<sup>55</sup> In 2022-23, Defence contributed GENADs to a number of military operations including: OP ASLAN (United Nations Mission in South Sudan, UNMISS); Operation ACCORDIAN (Middle East Region), as well as integration of GENADs and/or GFPs across other short-term operations including VANUATU ASSIST and OP FLOOD ASSIST (Australia).<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Defence Progress report on Australia's National Action Plan on WPS July 2021-June 2023 (unpublished).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Defence progress report references in 2023 Government National Action Plan WPS (2021-2031) Interim Report (unpublished). Scheduled for public release by DFAT October 16, 2023.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.



## KPI 11: No significant difference in cultural reporting between women and men

The wellbeing and workplace experience of our workforce is critical in attracting and retaining people within the workforce. Defence is committed to maintaining and promoting a culture where people regardless of their gender are supported.

Progress towards understanding women's and men's experience in the ADF and their wellbeing is measured against the following sub-indicators:

- a. Women and men feel equally supported in work and career experience.
- b. No significant difference in reported wellbeing.
- c. No significant difference in experiences of sexual assault.

### Key Findings for KPI 11

**In 2022-23, there are no gendered differences in wellbeing but women continue to have moderately lower levels of morale than men.**

- Both women and men have positive perceptions of wellbeing and job engagement but poor perceptions of career progression.
- In appreciating leadership, women have more positive views of Senior Leaders than men.
- There are still gendered differences between ADF women and men's experiences of sexual assault. Women disproportionately experience and report sexual misconduct.

## Women's experiences in the ADF



### 2022-23 Defence survey results indicate:

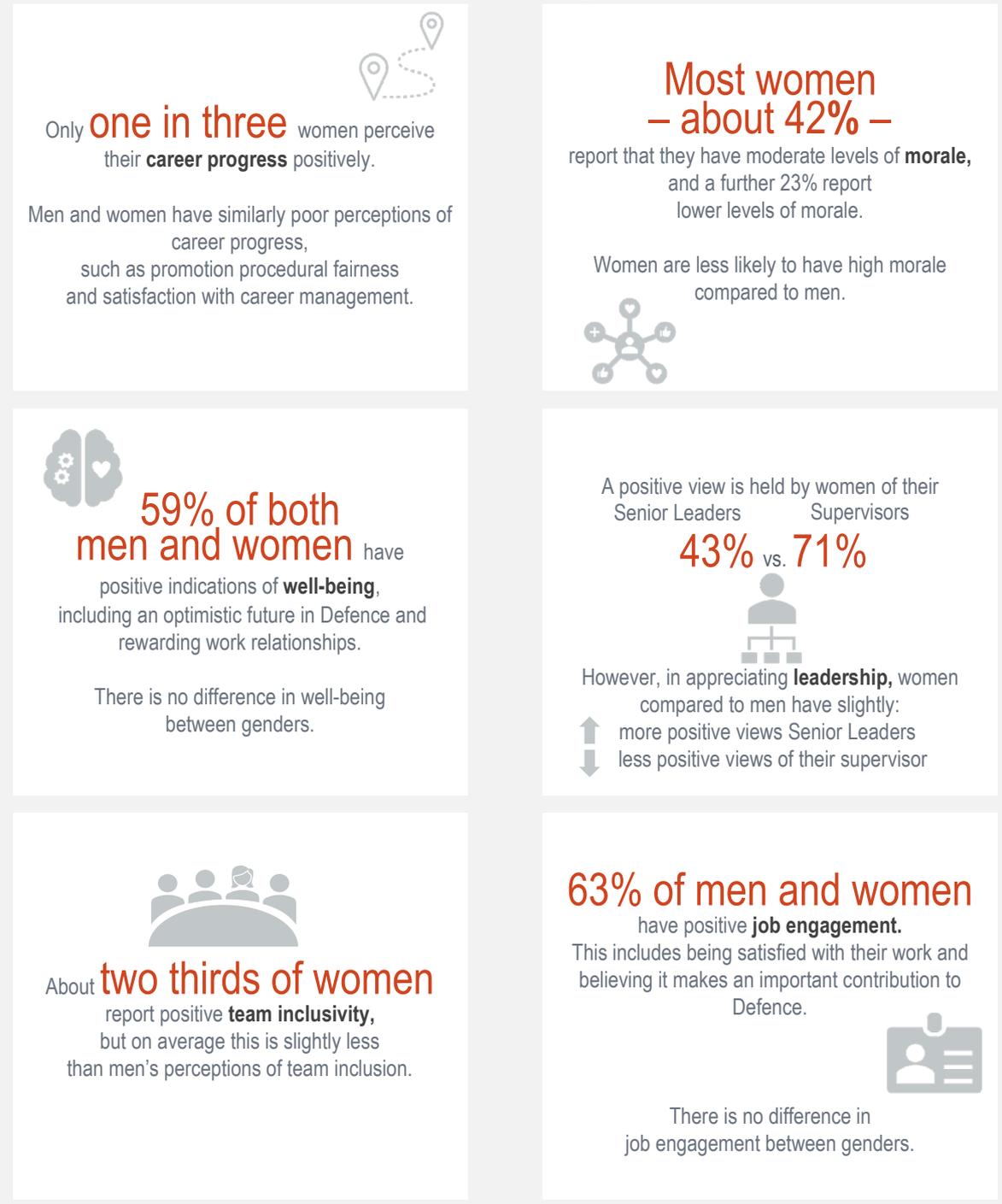


Figure 24: Perceptions of women's experience in the workplace

## Sexual offences and sexual harassment in the ADF

Defence has surveyed the workforce to gain insight into experiences of unacceptable behaviour since 1998. The current survey tool is the Workplace Behaviours Survey, first administered in 2018. Prior to this survey the Unacceptable Behaviour Research Program ran from 2012 to 2017. It was developed to measure attitudes towards, and experiences of, unacceptable behaviour in Defence. The revised survey replaced the previous definitions-based approach to measuring unacceptable behaviour with a behaviours-based approach.

One of the outcomes of the survey is insights about people’s experiences of the actions taken by themselves and the response of supervisors and the organisation to issues and/or complaints raised. Being able to report incidents and being confident that reports will be taken seriously and action taken is central for trust to be placed in processes, actions and leaders.

**Table 8: Experiences of unacceptable behaviour in the ADF by gender**

	Navy		Army		Air Force	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>2021</b>	53%	33%	53%	29.9%	46%	26%
<b>2022-23</b>	56.4%	34.6%	49.9%	29.7%	46.6%	29%

**Note:** % of total men or women survey respondents (excluding training establishments) comparing 2021-22 to 2022-23

Experiences of unacceptable behaviour have remained consistently higher for women than men since 2013. In 2022-23 across the Services women experienced unacceptable behaviour proportionally more than men (Table 8)<sup>57</sup>. A larger proportion of women in the Navy experienced sexual misconduct than those in the Army or Air Force. Similarly, across the Services a smaller proportion of women experienced unacceptable behaviours. However, the proportion of men reporting experiences of unacceptable behaviours has increased for Navy and Air Force.

### Taking action in response to incidents

Overall, a smaller proportion of women than men took some form of action such as seeking advice or assistance or making a complaint or report. In 2022-23 overall, a smaller proportion of men sought advice or to make a complaint than women (see Figure 25). Women were much more likely to make a complaint, while men were more likely to self-manage or have their supervisors deal with the unacceptable behaviour. This pattern is comparable to that observed in 2021.

<sup>57</sup> Workplace Behaviour Survey Data, 2021 and 2022-23

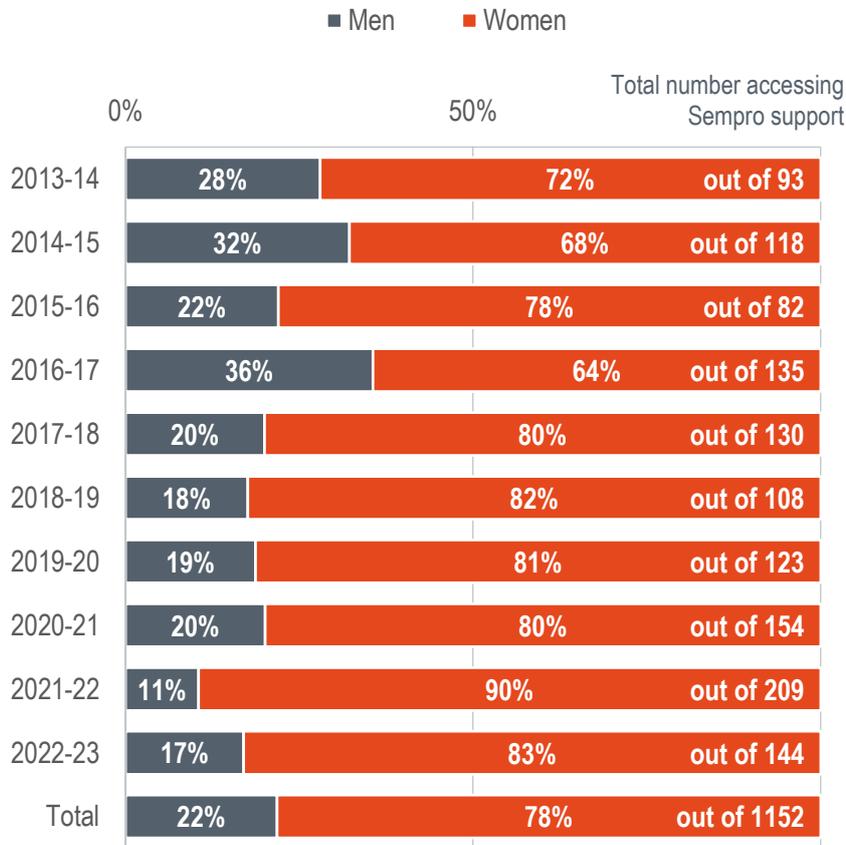


**Figure 25: Proportion of ADF women’s and men’s self-reported actions taken, 2022-23**

The gendered nature of unacceptable behaviour is mirrored in data from the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office (SeMPRO). SeMPRO was established as part of Defence’s response to the Broderick Review (2012) and provides support to any current or ex-serving ADF member, APS employee, Defence contractor, ADF Cadet, Instructor or Officer of ADF Cadets, commander, manager, colleague, friend, or family member who has been impacted by sexual misconduct. It is able to offer one-on-one support or advice on how to best manage or respond to an incident. Figure 26 shows proportion of women and men ADF members supported through SeMPRO Services in the last 10 years.

The numbers of people accessing SeMPRO Services has decreased from 2021-22 (209 cases) to 144 cases in 2022-23. Over the past ten years, women have accessed Services in the majority of cases although there has been some variation. 2016/17 saw the highest proportion of men using SeMPRO Services (36%) and 2021-22 the lowest proportion (11%). In line with other Defence data, it is clear that women disproportionately experience and report sexual misconduct.

**Proportion of women and men accessing support  
SeMPRO since 2013-14**



**Figure 26: Proportion of ADF women and men accessing support from SeMPRO since 2013-14**

Defence has commenced the development of an enterprise level Sexual Misconduct Risk Management Strategy (DSMRMS) for managing the risk of sexual misconduct for members.

In addressing the recommendations in the Respect@Work report, and the Government’s amendment of the *Fair Work Legislation (Secure Jobs, Better Pay) Act 2022*, which amended the *Fair Work Act (2009)* Defence continues to support and create a respectful and safe workplace. Under the Act, all Defence workers can refer a sexual harassment complaint to the Fair Work Commission for resolution. The Act recognises the special circumstances of the ADF in relation to the jurisdiction of the Fair Work Commission to issue a Stop Sexual Harassment Order and the impact this could have on ADF operations, Australia’s defence or national security.

To ensure ADF members have access to a similar mechanism, Defence has updated the Defence Regulation 2016 to protect ADF members from the risk of continued sexual harassment while on duty. The new Defence mechanism is titled Stop Sexual Harassment Directions and complements existing processes, including management of unacceptable behaviour. This change took effect from 21 March 2023.

## KPI 12: Increase in the number of women in leadership positions

Progress towards gender diversity in leadership positions within ADF is measured by the following sub-indicators:

- a. Women are provided with equal opportunity to develop as leaders and prepare for promotion.
- b. Equal proportion of women and men promoted out of those found eligible and suitable across occupational groups.<sup>58</sup>
- c. Proportion of women in leadership pipeline ranks for Officers and SNCO is proportional to their participation rate.

This KPI is closely tied to KPI 4 -- learning opportunities which support access to leadership.

### Key Findings for KPI 12

**The proportion of women in the senior ranks remain stable in 2022-23 but women continue to be underrepresented in senior positions.**

- There is a substantial gendered gap between women found eligible and suitable for promotion and those who get promoted.
- The proportion of women in the pipeline for senior Officer and Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Ranks in 2022-23 remains stable.
- Air Force continue to have a healthier pipeline of women in Senior Officer and SNCO ranks than Navy and Army.
- Women in Officer and NCO senior positions are still proportionately lower than women's participation rate in each Service.

### Professional military and leadership development

Professional leadership development is part of talent management and investment in people. The new Defence People System is intended to deliver an integrated workforce capability that is contemporary and fit for purpose for career management and development. For developing future military leaders, the Australian Defence College offers three professional military education courses: Defence and Strategic Studies Course; the Australian Command and Staff College Course; and the Capability and Technology Management Course. These courses are open by selection to officers and senior Warrant Officers who have achieved their relevant career requirements, and who have leadership potential. These courses support members' competitiveness for promotion at middle and senior levels within the career continuum.

In 2022-23, all women officers were represented at leadership development courses either in greater or almost equal to their Officer and Other Rank participation rates in the ADF (see Table 9). Army women Other Ranks are represented at a level lower than their participation rates in Other Ranks. Air Force women are represented in leadership development courses are either greater or almost equal to their Officer and Other Rank participation rates.

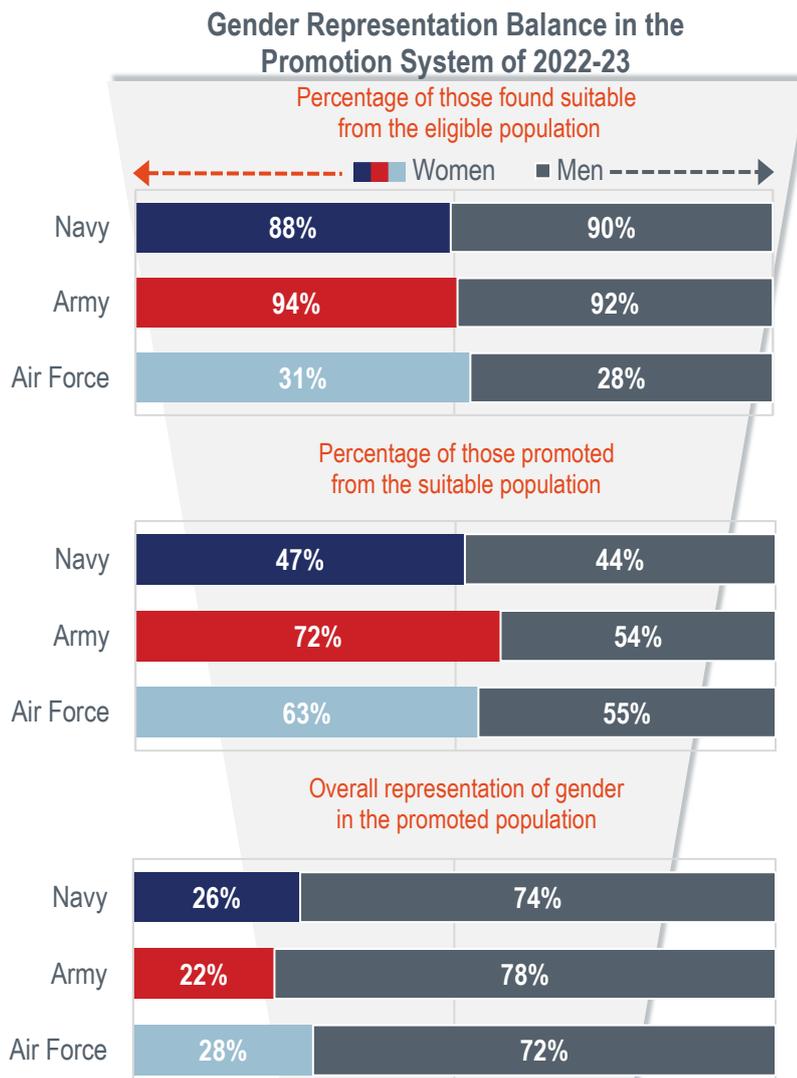
<sup>58</sup> For this sub-indicator, data for each Service is presented because comparison between Services across occupational groups is not possible. Army Officers are defined by two career streams (Generalist Service officer and Specialist Service officer), not occupational groups.

**Table 9: Number of women on professional military education and leadership development courses as a percentage of total cohort, 2022-23**

	Cohort		No. of women on course		% of women on course		Service Participation	
	Officer	NCO	Officer	NCO	Officer	NCO	Officer	NCO
<b>Navy</b>	- Unavailable -		- Unavailable -		- Unavailable -		- Unavailable -	
<b>Army</b>	580	261	72	42	12%	16%	19%	14%
	<i>Total (841)</i>		<i>Total (140)</i>		<i>Total (13.6.%)</i>		<i>Total (15.3%)</i>	
<b>Air Force</b>	397	13	63	2	16%	15%	26%	27%
	<i>Total (410)</i>		<i>Total (65)</i>		<i>Total (15.9%)</i>		<i>Total (26.5%)</i>	

### Promotions

Promotion for both Officers and Other Ranks is based on an order of merit that considers an individual’s experience in rank, completion of promotion prerequisites, performance history, and an assessment of individual skills, abilities and potential. Suitability for promotion is a function of time in rank, completion of promotion courses, performance history and individual skills and capabilities. Promotion is however a function of vacancy.



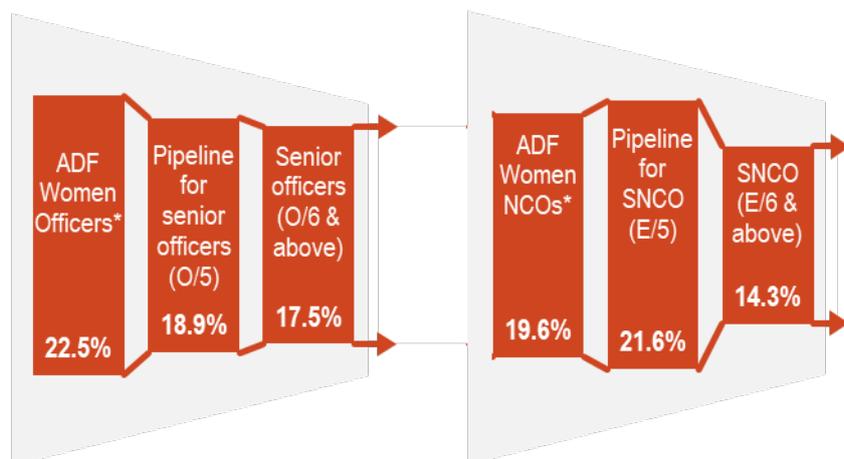
**Figure 27: Proportion of women and men being promoted, 2022-23**

Equal proportions of women and men across all three Services were found to be eligible (Figure 27). Army had the highest proportion of women found suitable for promotion, followed by Navy. Air Force had the lowest proportion of women and men found suitable. Out of those found suitable, a higher proportion of women than men across all services were considered to be suitable for promotion in the pool of eligible candidates. Army and Air Force had slightly higher proportion of women considered suitable for promotion than did Navy. Of women found eligible and suitable for promotion, a substantially lower number of women were promoted. There is a gap between women found eligible and suitable for promotion who then receive promotion. Increasing the proportion of women in senior leadership positions beyond their representation in a given service could be a point of intervention for increasing women in leadership positions.

### Women in senior leadership positions

Processes for ADF performance and career management are highly structured, with career progression through defined career paths to senior leadership. In the ADF, senior leaders are those at the O-6 (officers) and E-6 (Senior Non-Commissioned Officers (SNCO)) rank and above, and the pipeline up to O-5 and E-5 rank respectively.

The proportion of women in pipeline for senior Officer and Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Ranks in 2022-23 remains stable and has seen a slight increase since the last reporting period (Figure 28 and 29). Although, the proportion of women in the pipeline and leadership positions is still proportionately lower than men. In 2022-23, the pipeline for Senior Officers is smaller than pipeline for SNCO, but the proportion of women in Senior Officer roles is proportionately higher than women in SNCO.



\* DENOTES TOTAL POPULATION

**Figure 28: Proportion of ADF women in the Officer and Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Ranks and in pipeline for senior leadership, 2022-23**

In 2022-23, the proportion of Air Force women in Senior Officer and SNCO pipeline and positions continues to have a healthier leadership pipeline than Navy and Army. Army women in Officer and NCO senior and pipeline positions is the lowest. The pipeline of women for Officer and NCO senior positions remains comparable for Navy and Air Force. Across all Services the percentage of women in Officer and NCO senior positions continues to be disproportionately lower than women’s participation rate in each of the Services. Gender parity in ADF senior ranks cannot be achieved unless the critical interlinkages between all people management system functions are explored to address barriers and/or enablers for women stepping into leadership ranks.



\* DENOTES TOTAL POPULATION

**Figure 29: Proportion of ADF women in the Officer and Non-Commissioned Officer ranks, and in leadership pipeline, 2022-23**

## KPI 13: Women feel equally included in the ADF

Progress towards women feeling equally included in the ADF is measured by the following sub-indicators:

- a. Women and men are equally included.
- b. Women and men have equal feelings of belonging.
- c. Gendered experiences do not drive burnout.
- d. Women's health and wellness is comparable to women in the general population.

### Key Findings for KPI 13

**There are some gendered differences in the health and safety indicators that can lead to negative outcomes for women's sense of belonging and inclusion in the ADF.**

- Predicted probability of serious mental health illness is marginally higher (but not necessarily statistically significantly different) for Permanent women (7%) than men (6.4%).
- Permanent Army women and men are more likely to have a very high level of psychological distress than other Services.
- In 2022-23, the rate of work health and safety incidents was higher for women in Air Force and Army, but higher for men in Navy.
- Women and men in the Reserves have similar life satisfaction (77.1%) to the Australian population (74.4%)

### Inclusion

Work on inclusion continues with an international collaboration to develop a military measure of inclusivity intended to be validated in 2023-24.

### Women's Health, Safety and Wellness

*Healthy, safe workplaces, both physically and psychologically, are critical enablers to Defence capability...Protecting the health and safety of our people is therefore paramount in delivering the Defence mission.*

*Defence Work Health and Safety Strategy, 2017-2022*

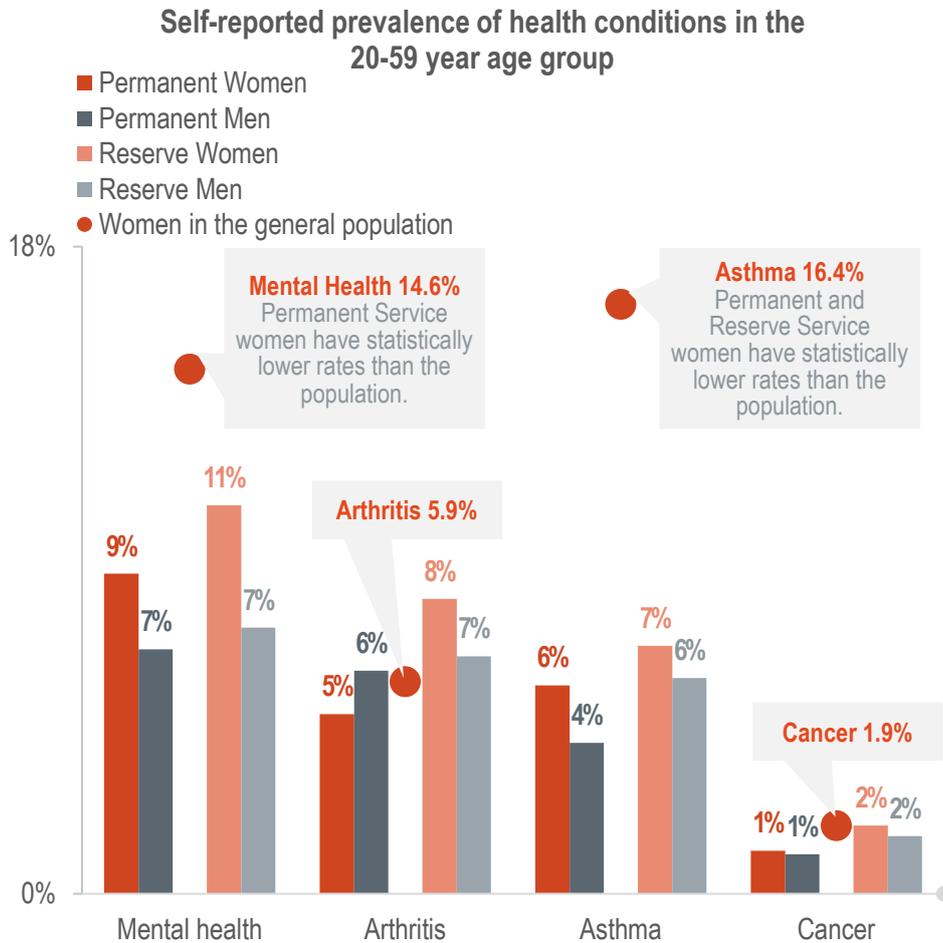
The inclusion of work health and safety indicators across the capability life cycle of ADF members and the possible gendered effects on the workforce needs to be embedded into workforce reporting so that Defence is to better able to identify and manage workplace and workforce risks. Integrating enterprise level health and safety indicators into the annual Women in ADF Report will provide further granularity on the gendered health impacts across a member's life-course.

This report highlights some of the preliminary findings on ADF women's health and safety and other women's health research currently led by Joint Health Command that will potentially inform the monitoring and reporting of women's health and safety risk measures in future.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Defence Directorate of Health Preliminary Gender Analysis of Defence Force Health Data in the ABS Census 2021. Unpublished.

## Indicators of mental health and wellness

In 2021, the Australian Bureau of Statistics included a question on Defence service in the Australian Census of Population and Housing. This provides a unique opportunity to compare the health of currently-Serving women to that of currently-serving men and to women in the general community who have never served. The analysis presented in Figure 30 and Annex B includes people aged 20-59 years and focuses on four health conditions relevant to this age group: mental health, arthritis, asthma and cancer.<sup>60</sup>



**Figure 30: Self-reported prevalence of health conditions in the ADF and general population<sup>60</sup>**

A preliminary analysis conducted by the Defence Directorate of Health research of ADF Health Data in the ABS Census 2021 suggests that the only statistically significant differences between the general population and those who were currently serving were for self-reported prevalence of mental health issues and asthma, which were lower in serving women. This could be an artefact of the screening process for recruitment. There were no meaningful differences found between gender in the ADF.

In 2023, for the first time, levels of psychological distress were included in the ADF Census. A widely accepted scale for the assessment of risk for serious mental health illness in the general population (Kessler Psychological Distress Scale K6) was used. Analysis of preliminary data suggests that the predicted probability of serious mental illness in the population is 6.6% of ADF Permanent and 2.8% of ADF Reserves. This is lower than in the Australian population.

<sup>60</sup> Defence Directorate of Health Preliminary Gender Analysis of Defence Force Health Data in the ABS Census 2021. Unpublished.

The data suggests that the probability of serious mental health illness is higher for Permanent women (7%) than men (6.4%) (Table 11).

For comparison, in the general Australian population (using the Kessler K6) 11.6% of adults had a very high level of psychological stress. 15% of young people (18-24 years old) experienced very high psychological distress in 2017-2018.<sup>61</sup>

Identification of gendered differences in Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) will be examined in future reports when considering the career life cycle.

**Table 10: Predicted probability of serious mental illness in the population, ADF Census 2023**

	Permanent		Reserve	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Navy	7.7%	6.3%	2.4%	2.1%
	Total (6.7%)		Total (2.5%)	
Army	7.8%	6.9%	2.6%	2.7%
	Total (7.2%)		Total (2.7%)	
Air Force	5.5%	5.3%	3.6%	3.2%
	Total (5.5%)		Total (3.4%)	

Permanent Army women and men are more likely to have a very high level of psychological distress than other services.

For the first time, the 2023 ADF Census included subjective measures of life satisfaction to better understand and support the wellbeing of ADF members. The 2023 ADF Census included some questions about how satisfied or dissatisfied ADF members were with some of things happening in their lives. The ADF census measured life satisfaction across 14 items on a scale ranging from 1 to 10, where 1 means 'completely dissatisfied' and 10 means 'completely satisfied'. Preliminary analysis of the data is a summary measure of subjective wellbeing, reflecting how satisfied ADF members are feeling with what they are achieving in life generally (7 or more reflects satisfaction in life).

Preliminary analysis of the data in Table 12 and Figure 31 suggests that overall women in Reserve force generally have a higher life satisfaction (73.3%) when compared to men (70.1%). Similarly, women in Permanent force have a slightly higher life satisfaction of 55.6% when compared to 53.3% for men in Permanent force. Overall, Air Force Permanent members have a higher satisfaction in life than in Army and Navy. Army women in Reserves generally have a higher life satisfaction (79.7%) and Army men in Permanent force have the lowest (61.8%). For comparison, using Personal Subjective Wellbeing measure<sup>62</sup> of satisfaction, overall ADF members across all services generally have lower life satisfaction scores when compared to Australian population (74.4%) in 2022.<sup>63</sup> The strength of life satisfaction amongst women in Reserves is more comparable to the Australian population.

<sup>61</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing. Australia's Health 2022, in brief. [Australia's health 2022: in brief. Summary - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](#). Accessed 29 September 2023.

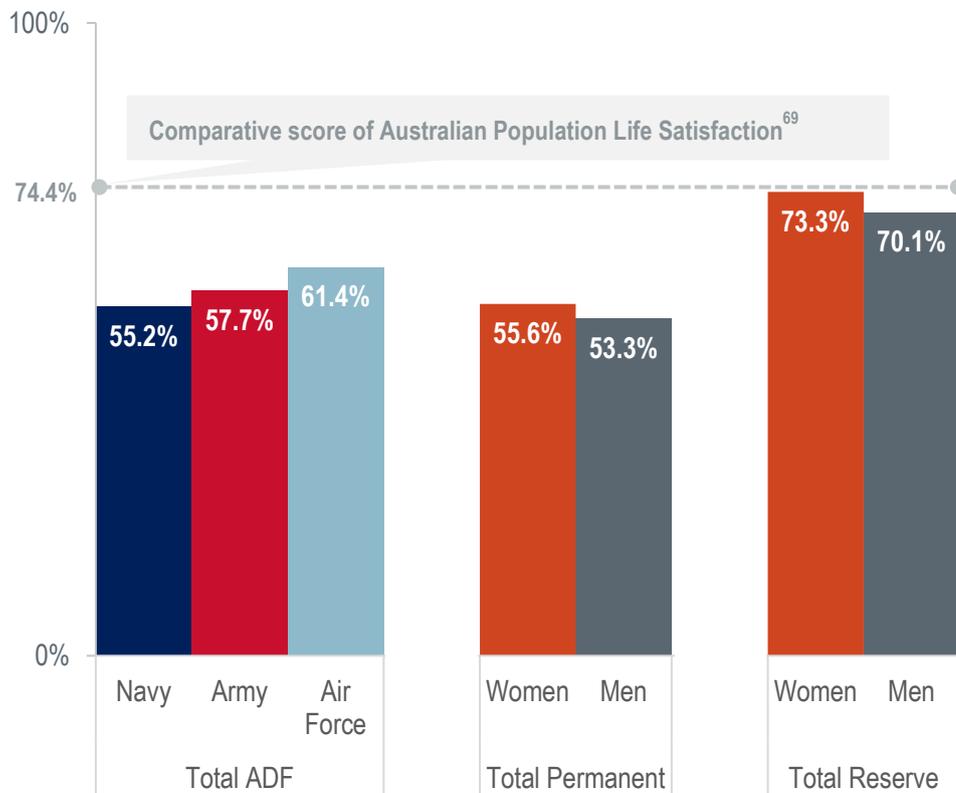
<sup>62</sup> [Australian Unity Wellbeing Index Survey report \(2023\)](#) measure Personal Subjective Wellbeing using two methods, both of which measure satisfaction on a 0 to 10 choice scale. The first is a single item (GLS: Global Life Satisfaction): 'How satisfied are you with your life as a whole?' The second is the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI), which averages the level of satisfaction across seven life domains – standard of living, health, achieving in life, relationships, safety, community connectedness, and future security. Accessed 06 October 2023.

<sup>63</sup> Australian Centre on Quality of Life at the School of Psychology, Deakin University and Australian Unity (2023) [Australian Unity Wellbeing Index Survey 39 Report](#). Accessed 06 October 2023.

**Table 11: Self-reported measures of life-satisfaction in the population, ADF Census 2023**

	Permanent		Reserve		Total ADF	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Navy	55.7%	52.6%	67.6%	67.7%	57.4%	54.6%
	Total (53.1%)		Total (67.7%)		Total (55.2%)	
Army	53.7%	51.0%	74.7%	69.8%	61.2%	57.3%
	Total (51.2%)		Total (70.7%)		Total (57.7%)	
Air Force	57.4%	58.9%	73.4%	72.8%	60.6%	62.0%
	Total (58.3%)		Total (72.6%)		Total (61.4%)	

**Self-reported Measure of Life Satisfaction**



**Figure 31: Self-reported measures of life-satisfaction in the population, ADF Census 2023.**

### The ADF Life-course Cohort Study (ADFLCS)

Joint Health Command is scoping the design of a comprehensive longitudinal health study that will measure and monitor the physical, mental and social health of ADF members through their life course. A number of sub-projects are underway that will inform the future design and implementation of what a life course study could look like in the ADF. The ADFLCS will provide an enduring dataset that will be a critical resource to guide future policy and programs that enhance the health and wellbeing of ADF members. Similar longitudinal research studies are already being conducted in international militaries such as the USA, UK and Canada.

## Work Health and Safety (WHS) trend analysis<sup>64</sup>

The following analysis provides gendered breakdown of WHS incidents, rate of incidents and nature of injury from the Work Health Safety Management Information System (Sentinel).

### Trend

Overall the number of ADF members involved in WHS incidents has decreased by 30.9% over the last five financial years. The number of men involved decreased by 34.3% and number of women involved decreased by 15.9%. The decrease in notifiable incidents was similar for men and women (both around 13%). However, for incidents that were not notifiable to Comcare, the downturn was higher for men, decreasing by 34.7% while the number of women decreased by 15.9%.

### Rate of incident per 1,000 Employees

The rate of incidents per 1,000 employees in the 2022-23 was higher for women. This was evident in the under 30 age groups, with little difference by gender for those aged over 30. However, the rate for the more serious incidents that were notifiable to Comcare was higher for men.

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*In 2022-23, the rate of people involved in incidents per 1,000 employees was higher for women in Air Force and Army, but higher for men in Navy.*

*Nearly a third (30%) of reports were from Air Force women. The rate of people involved in incidents per 1,000 employees for notifiable incidents was higher amongst Air Force and Navy men than women.*

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### Nature of Injury

The nature of injury was entered for 58% of the reports. For nearly a third of all reports, women reported the nature of injury as traumatic joint/ ligament and muscle/ tendon injury (30%), which was at a higher rate than reports of this nature by men (37.2% for women compared to 27.9% for men, per 1,000 employees). For women, reports also frequently involved wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage (10%), and fractures (4%). Drilling down, the traumatic joint/ ligament and muscle/ tendon injuries for women were predominantly soft tissue injury due to trauma or unknown mechanisms (14% of all women injuries, rate 17.9 per 1,000 employees compared to 12% of all men's injuries, rate 13.2 per 1,000 employees) or sprain – strain (5% of all women injuries, rate 5.9 per 1,000 employees, compared to 4% of all men's injuries, rate 4.1 per 1,000 employees).

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<sup>64</sup> Methodology for the data analysis included the use of Safety Trend Analysis Reporting System (STARS) on 10 July 2023 for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2023. The data included 44,080 incidents involving 68,539 people and did not include cancelled or rejected reports. Headcount data as at 30 Jun 2023 was extracted from Management Analysis and Reporting Solution (MARS) on 13 July 2023 to calculate rates per 1,000 employees.

## Conclusion

*“Many companies assume that diversity metrics are all about the “body count”—how many women...of other underrepresented groups they employ and in what positions. Those are outcome metrics, and they’re important. They’re a good indicator...vital for establishing a baseline against which progress can be measured; and they’re necessary for assessing the effectiveness of various interventions.”*

*Joan Williams and Jamie Dolkas*

*Harvard Business Review, March-April 2022*

Since the Broderick review in 2012, Defence remains committed to promote and improve gender equality outcomes in the ADF. The Women in ADF report tracks Defence’s annual progress against gender equality indicators. Ten years on Defence has been tracking women’s participation rate which only indicates a representational problem.

This year’s report highlights that there have been small gains across the KPIs but the overall participation rate for women has remained relatively stable. Compared to 2021-22 data, women across all three services are serving for longer. The ADF is still experiencing challenges reaching Critical Mass in many workforce segments. Women’s representation in Communication and Cyber workforce segment continues to decline.

Recruitment and retention of women remains a challenge. The proportion of women enlisting in the ADF continues to be lower than men and not enough to meet the specific gendered gaps in recruitment targets. Having the flexibility to manage family and/or caring responsibilities with an ADF career remains a key driver of retention for women. The evidence in this report suggests improved use of the reserve workforce and increased appetite for flexibility amongst women than men. Cultural challenges remain on the acceptance and inclusiveness of part-time workforce persist.

Like other Australian employers and industries, the pipeline in the middle ranks shows lagging progress – and a persistent underrepresentation of women in senior ranks. Gender parity in senior leadership, postings and deployments is yet to be achieved in the ADF.

Workplace experience remains different for women and men. ADF women consistently experience unacceptable behaviour at a higher rate than ADF men. Women continue to have moderately lower levels of morale than men. In 2022-23, the predicted probability of serious mental health illness is higher for Permanent women than men. These stressors of workplace experience where women feel unsafe, less valued and supported and respected needs ongoing organisational commitment and attention – so that meaningful progress toward gender equality outcomes is achievable.

The release of the Defence Strategic Review in 2023 will see many changes in the ADF. The posturing of many force elements in the northern parts of Australia including Townsville and Darwin will have an impact on service families and women. Ensuring these gaining communities have the necessary infrastructure and services, including high quality child care and out of school hours care, to support ADF families and women will be crucial to ensuring women and families are well supported to continue to service.

To make meaningful and sustainable progress toward gender equality in the ADF, attention to these areas are needed to create a more gender-equitable future force in the coming decades.

## ANNEX A

## WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN THE ADF

The following six criteria use data from the YourSay Workplace Experience Survey. A chi square analysis was conducted to allow comparison of significance of difference based on the percentages of Positive, Negative, and Neutral responses split by Gender for FY 2022/2023.

**Criteria 1: Women report the same level of wellbeing**

In 2022-23 women and men reported similar rates of wellbeing. The wellbeing scale measured engagement and interest in daily work activities, work allowing a purposeful and meaningful life, optimism about future in the organisation and supportive and rewarding work relationships. In Army and Air Force women report similar rates of wellbeing as men. For Navy personnel, wellbeing has declined for both genders compared to FY 21-22 but the decline was bigger for men (-4.6%) than women (-1.83) narrowing the gender gap.

**Criteria 2: Women present the same level of morale**

In 2022-23 there was a significant difference between women and men in reported levels of morale. Women were less likely to report overall high morale (-7.0%) and more likely to report low morale (+2.7%) which indicates that overall women report a lower level of morale than men. Fewer women are reporting high morale compared to 2021-22 (38.4% to 34.8%) whereas the proportion of men reporting high morale has remained virtually unchanged from 2021-22 to 2022-23 (41.0% to 41.9%). Overall levels of morale are low for men and women consistent across ADF and Services. This decline in women's morale is reflected across all three services and may be a reflection of ADF wide changes that may be having a greater impact upon women than men.

In 2022-23 Navy reported the highest difference in morale between women and men with a 7.5 percentage point difference between women and men reporting high morale and 4 percentage point difference between women and men reporting low morale. This is similar to 2021-22 data where 7.1 percentage point fewer women reported high levels of morale. More men are reporting lower morale in 2022-23 however the proportion of women reporting low morale remains unchanged.

In 2022-23 Army women reported lower levels of morale to men, that is, with a 6.3 percentage point difference between women and men reporting high morale. This contrasts to 2021-22 results where similar levels of high morale were reported between men and women. However, the difference between women and men reporting low morale was comparable to 2021-22.

In 2022-23 Air Force women reported lower levels of morale to men, that is, with a 6.9 percentage point difference between women and men reporting high morale. This contrasts to 2021-22 results where similar levels of high morale were reported between men and women. However, the difference between women and men reporting low morale was comparable to 2021-22.

**Criteria 3: Women report the same level of appreciation of leaders**

In 2022-23 ADF women reported significantly more positive impressions of senior leaders. All Services reported similar significant gender differences, although Air Force women were the most positive overall. Satisfaction with senior leadership has notably decreased though for Air force and Navy (reporting lower levels in 2022-23 compared to 2021-22) whereas Army had a slight decrease in the proportions and in the gender gap of those dissatisfied with the senior leadership (-1.2%).

**Criteria 4: Perceptions of career progress are similar**

In 2022-23 ADF women reported similar perceptions of career progress to men overall. Perceived satisfaction or dissatisfaction with career progression was evenly distributed across the three services. Perceptions of promotion opportunities are low overall, and there are no statistically significant differences by gender. This pattern is consistent for ADF and all Services. However, Navy reported the highest level of dissatisfaction with career progression (45% followed by Army and Air Force respectively). It is worth highlighting the scale items for career progress scale as these include concepts critical for career satisfaction and central to understanding gender equality:

- People are promoted on merit
- I consider the promotion process in Defence to be fair
- I consider the promotion process in Defence to be transparent
- My current duties are related to my training education
- I feel like I have no personal control over my career.

**Criteria 5: Perceptions of team inclusivity are similar**

In 2022-23 ADF women reported a statistically significantly lower perception of team inclusivity than ADF men. This decline in perceived team inclusivity has continued with the gender gap widening from 2021-22 to 2022-23 (1.2 to 3.3%). Team inclusivity examines aspects such as cooperation, honesty and transparency, respect, acceptance as team members, inclusion in activities, comfort identifying as a member of a diversity group and feeling like an outsider. Women are less likely to have a high level of agreement about team inclusivity, and a more negative view of inclusivity. Women in all three services reported significantly lower levels of perceptions of team inclusivity. Navy women reported the largest decline in perceived team inclusivity (10.4% disagreed teams were inclusive in 2021-22 increasing to 16.7% in 2022-23).

**Criteria 6: Perceptions of job engagement are similar**

In 2022-23 ADF women reported similar perceptions of job engagement (satisfaction, personal accomplishment, important contribution, strong sense of belonging to and pride in Defence) to ADF men. For Navy women the gender difference has closed compared to FY 21-22 (difference in Agree/SA was -4.61 in FY21-22). This change was driven by a decline in engagement with Navy men rather than an improvement for women. Army women reported similar perceptions of job engagement as did Air Force women. Overall ADF women report a lower rate of positive perception of job engagement comparing 2021-22 to 2022-23 (-2.2%). Air Force women reported the largest decrease in job satisfaction (3.7%) whereas the other services remained stable.

**ANNEX B****COMPARISON OF FOUR COMMON HEALTH CONDITIONS FOR ADF AND THE AUSTRALIAN POPULATION****Mental health**

Compared to current-serving men, the self-reported prevalence of mental health issues was 2.1% higher for Permanent women (8.9% women compared to 6.8% men) and 3.4% higher for Reserve women (10.8% women, 7.4% men). However, these differences were not statistically meaningful. Compared to women in the general population (14.6%), the self-reported prevalence of mental health issues was 5.7% lower for Permanent women and 3.8% lower for Reserve women. This difference for Permanent women was statistically meaningful.

**Arthritis**

Compared to current-serving men, the self-reported prevalence of arthritis was 1.2% lower for Permanent women (5.0% women, 6.2% men) and 1.6% higher for Reserve women (8.2% women, 6.6% men). However, these differences were not statistically meaningful. Compared to women in the general population (5.9%), the self-reported prevalence of arthritis was 0.9% lower for Permanent women and 2.3% higher for Reserve women, but these differences were also not statistically meaningful.

**Asthma**

Compared to current-serving men, the self-reported prevalence of asthma was 1.6% higher for Permanent women (5.8% women, 4.2% men) and 0.9% higher for Reserve women (6.9% women, 6.0% men). These differences were not statistically meaningful. Compared to women in the general population (16.4%), the self-reported prevalence of asthma was 10.6% lower for Permanent women and 9.5% lower for Reserve women, with both differences statistically meaningful.

**Cancer**

Compared to current-serving men, the self-reported prevalence of cancer was similar for Permanent women (1.2% women, 1.1% men) and Reserve women (1.9% women, 1.6% men), with no meaningful differences. Compared to women in the general population (1.9%), the self-reported prevalence of cancer was similar for Permanent and Reserve women, with no meaningful differences.