

Case Referrals to Defence

What is a case referral?

Once your report of abuse has been found to be within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction, you may elect to provide a case referral to Defence. This provides more information to Defence about your experience of abuse, and gives Defence the opportunity to consider what, if any, action may be appropriate to take.

Case referrals are a summary of your report of abuse, and will only be provided to Defence after you provide your consent for us to do so (via a consent form). You have an opportunity to view the case referral and make any changes before it is provided to Defence.

A case referral can be made in the following circumstances:

- your report of abuse involved an alleged perpetrator who is still a member of the Australian Defence Force, or
- the abuse you reported is contemporary (i.e. it occurred since 2011), or
- you have otherwise requested our Office provide a case referral to Defence.

Contact with Defence

You can choose between two types of contact from Defence as part of the consent form; direct contact or no direct contact.

If you choose direct contact, Defence will contact you as part of this process or any subsequent action they may take. You can also specify any conditions regarding this contact.

If you choose no direct contact, you will not be contacted by Defence. It is important to note this condition may adversely impact Defence's ability to take any further action.

What happens with the case referral?

The information in the case referral will be provided directly to the Defence Response Unit (DRU), a secure cell within the Command Support Branch of the Australian Defence Force Headquarters which reports directly to the Chief of the Defence Force.

Defence is required to comply with the Australian Privacy Principles in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act). The Privacy Act regulates the manner in which personal information can be used internally by Defence or disclosed to other bodies.

Contact us

ombudsman.gov.au
1300 395 776

GPO Box 442
Canberra ACT 2601

The Ombudsman has offices in:

- » Adelaide
- » Brisbane
- » Canberra
- » Melbourne
- » Perth
- » Sydney

A case referral provides more information to Defence about your experience of abuse, and gives Defence the opportunity to consider what, if any, action may be appropriate to take.

Defence will assess the information contained in the case referral in accordance with existing Defence policies and processes. This will involve consideration of what, if any, appropriate and viable action could be taken to further investigate and respond to the allegations of abuse.

The case referral is likely to be passed to the relevant Service (i.e. Royal Australian Air Force, Royal Australian Navy or Australian Army), who will be responsible for managing any action taken in response to the abuse described in the case referral. This may include administrative actions or a review of systems and processes. The case referral may also be forwarded to the Australian Defence Force Investigative Service (ADFIS) for assessment for further action such as a referral to the Joint Military Police Unit (JMPU).

There may be other circumstances where the information provided will be of value to Defence's broader cultural change without leading to specific action (for example if the alleged abuser is no longer a member of Defence).

Need more information?

If you have any questions or concerns about your case referral, contact your Liaison Officer during business hours (9am – 5pm AEST) on **1300 395 776** or via email at defenceforce.ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

More information is available at ombudsman.gov.au.

Please note: This document is intended as a guide only. For this reason, the information should not be relied on as legal advice or regarded as a substitute for legal advice in individual cases. To the maximum extent permitted by the law, the Commonwealth Ombudsman is not liable to you for any loss or damage suffered as a result of reliance on this document. For the most up-to-date versions of cited Acts, please refer to the [Federal Register of Legislation](#).