Air Force Culture Review 2015

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Executive Summary

Sexual violence is an extremely complex and prominent problem in New Zealand. The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) is not immune to these problems, and the organisation has recognised that it has a serious issue that needs to be addressed. Urgent and sustained action is required. Some prevention efforts to prevent sexual assault and improve policies and procedures appear to have already been undertaken to better support personnel who are victims of harmful sexual behaviour, but not yet to a sufficient degree. It is positive to note reports that the Wellbeing Directorate, Defence Chaplains, Defence Health, Military Police, Defence College, Defence Recruiting and the More Military Women programme are supporting the wellbeing and welfare of personnel and their families with activities aligned to the NZDF sexual assault prevention and management workplan.

NZDF is aiming to provide a safe environment free from harmful sexual behaviour for all personnel and their families and despite the serious issues highlighted in this report they are to be commended for taking a pro-active approach to this nation-wide problem. In December 2014, the Chief of Defence directed the establishment of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Management (SAPM) Governance Group. It has established a two year work plan to February 2017. This plan is promised to be comprehensive, integrated with related work and managed as a living project that is updated and amended regularly.

More knowledge and awareness of the current state regarding harmful sexual behaviour was needed by NZDF to inform ongoing prioritisation, programme development and evaluation. Obtaining this information from NZDF personnel was necessary because of limitations with existing NZDF data, and the majority of relevant literature about sexual abuse in military environments was from overseas defence forces - principally the US Defence Force. Whilst the SAPM programme is NZDF wide, discussions at the Air Force Leadership’s Forum in 2015 made it clear that immediate action was needed to better understand the specific issues raised for Air Force. Tiaki Consultants was approached by NZDF SAPM Governance Group with a request to carry out the “Air Force Culture
Tiaki Consultants is an independent, specialist sexual violence prevention research and training company, with the required knowledge, experience and credibility to complete the Review. A key aim of the Review was to help inform responses to, and the prevention of any sexual violence occurring within the Air Force and to contribute to the development of a safer NZDF organisation.

In order to gather data from the Royal New Zealand Airforce (RNZAF), a combination of simple random sampling and purposive sampling was used to obtain the final interview pool consisting of 23 Air Force personnel and one external representative. There was an equal split of genders, recent recruits, and a wide range of ranks and trades. Data from these interviews was analysed by the research team using qualitative content analysis.

In general participants reported few concerns for their own or their peer’s safety however there were sufficient reports, especially from women participants, to indicate a number of serious issues within the Air Force which seem to have enabled harmful sexual behaviours and a culture of sexism to persist over many years. None of the male participants in the Review reported any personal experiences of sexual harm, but this does not mean that sexual harm towards males does not exist within the Air Force. The main focus of the report is therefore on male sexually harmful behaviour toward female Air Force personnel.

A time-limited literature review related to harmful sexual behaviour identified numerous theories to attempt to explain the existence of sexual violence in the military. Hyper-masculinity, the privileging of traditional “male” attributes over traditional “female” attributes, conditioned obedience, isolation from external perspectives and support, implicit sanctioning of violence and aggression and the impact of alcohol misuse were identified. An extensive amount of data about the psychological, emotional and physical effects of harmful sexual behaviour was found in the literature, but there was a significant gap identified about effective prevention and post-assault support. Barriers to reporting and help-
seeking were well recorded and other strategies to prevent harm were identified.

The Review identified long-held and widespread sexist attitudes and ongoing gross and derogatory sexist comments directed towards women including anti-female attitudes and behaviour, which impacted upon their desire to remain in the Air Force. Older males, particularly those in senior command roles, were identified as often exhibiting anti-female attitudes and perpetuating harmful behaviour.

Some women reported not being affected in the same way by the sexist attitudes and behaviour and it was apparent that the men interviewed were largely unaware of the potentially harmful nature of sexist behaviours. Many participants, mostly male, showed an inability to fully differentiate between harmful and consensual sexual behaviour. Some women commented that they felt safer in the Air Force than they did in parts of rural and city life. This was in part because the Air Force was like a ‘family’ and also because men in the Air Force were often seen as protective of Air Force women.

Some women reported that allegations of harassment were handled swiftly and successfully through their chain of command. However, others stated that they did not report offences because they did not think that they would be believed, or treated seriously. Some participants reported that the lack of action to appropriately manage alleged incidents allowed harmful behaviour to continue and escalate over time and sometimes resulted in more women being harmed. Obstacles to reporting included a belief that complainants would not receive an impartial hearing, that they would be stigmatised or ostracised, that internal helpers were not sufficiently trained or confidential enough, that there was a lack of consistency and responsiveness to disclosures of harmful sexual behaviour and that there was a lack of specialist awareness and understanding at all levels of how to deal with complaints about sexual behaviour.
Most males and some females believed there was an on-going positive cultural shift in the Air Force, indicating that the conditions were improving for women and that there was a concerted effort to ensure women’s inclusiveness.

Tiaki Consultants was told that the initial findings of the Air Force Culture Review were shared with the Chiefs of the Army and Navy and “sincere disappointment was exhibited that attitudes of the nature found were present in the 21st Century”. The hierarchy has accepted that behaviours reported in this Review are also likely to be present across the Defence Force albeit hopefully limited to a small, but unwanted minority. The Chiefs agreed that urgent joint action was needed and that the findings of this review for the Air Force should immediately be applied across the Defence Force.

From this Review, the development and implementation of a long-term, integrated, organisational approach to create a safer environment for all personnel is recommended. It should utilise primary, secondary and tertiary prevention involving a broad range of coordinated strategies to achieve sustainable changes. Educating all new recruits about respectful relationships, providing sexual ethics programmes, improving the management of alcohol, bystander intervention programmes, environmental modifications in living quarters to promote safety, establishing an impartial, confidential, specialist response capability, enhancing health screening protocols, reviewing the requirement to report incidents through the chain of command and continuing to develop the “More Military Women” programme are warranted. It was noted that initiatives addressing some of these recommendations were underway prior to the Review, in particular the initiative in 2015 to establish safe and confidential disclosure of incidents is commended.

While the findings of this review in many ways seem to reinforce some of the decisions already made, and the processes identified by NZDF to reduce harm associated with sexual assault, there is still a substantial need for ongoing
improvements to ensure that an environment supportive of all personnel is established. Over time by improving secondary and tertiary responses to harmful sexual behaviour and repeatedly and consistently implementing primary prevention initiatives, it should be possible to achieve a safe organisation within which all personnel, particularly women, feel respected and valued.
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Glossary of Terms

Sexual violence: This is an umbrella term that includes any type of sexual behaviour that is harmful to a person. It includes commonly used terms such as sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault and rape.

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB): This term is used to focus on the behaviour and harm caused by a person who sexually abuses, sexually harasses, sexual assaults, or rapes another person.

Sexual assault: This term refers to any form of non-consensual sexual touching including indecent assault such as non-consensual touching of genitals whether over or underneath clothing, as well as attempted rape.

Rape: For the purposes of this Review, this term refers to vaginal, anal, or oral penetration, including penetration that occurs using fingers, objects, or genitals without consent.

Victim/Person harmed: Some participants indicated that they did not like being referred to as a ‘victim’. The term is often identified with being powerless, whereas many people who are victimised have actively tried to make themselves safe. The term ‘victim’ has therefore been avoided as much as possible throughout this Review, but has been used in some places especially when discussing people's progression through the justice system. The term ‘person harmed’ is preferred and is the term mostly used within the Review.

Person causing the harm: This term refers to the person perpetrating sexual harassment, sexual assault or rape.

Internal: In this Review this term is typically used to refer to policies, processes, services, and cultural norms inside the Air Force

External: In this Review, this term is typically used to refer to support services, policies, processes, and cultural norms outside the Air Force
Introduction

Whilst the Sexual Assault Prevention and Management (SAPM) programme is NZDF wide, discussions at the Air Force Leadership Forum in 2015 made it clear that immediate action was needed to better understand the specific issues raised for Air Force. Leadership within the Air Force needed to gain a greater understanding of any part of Air Force culture that may support sexual harassment or sexual assault. A key aim of the Review was to help focus on ways to improve responses to and the prevention of any sexual violence occurring within the Air Force and to contribute to the development of a safer organisation.

At the end of September 2015, Tiaki Consultants was approached by the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), Sexual Assault Prevention and Management Governance Group with a request to carry out the research project named “Air Force Culture Review” (the Review). The NZDF had set up this Governance Group in December 2014 to help develop and oversee improvements in current responses to sexual assaults and prevention initiatives.

The Governance Group approached Tiaki Consultants because it is an independent, specialist sexual violence prevention research and training company, with the required knowledge to help design and implement this Review.

Preparation of the Review began in mid-October with the data collection, analysis and report writing completed over a five-week period.

This Review begins with a synthesis of the literature available on harmful sexual behaviour. It then sets out the methods used to develop the study, select and recruit participants, and collect and analyse the data. Next, it sets out the key findings from the data. Finally, it discusses the conclusions drawn from the findings, and concludes with recommendations.
Background: A Review of the Literature

Introduction to the Literature
Recent years have seen an increasing number of studies dedicated to quantifying, explaining, and evaluating prevention training methods developed to deal with harmful sexual behaviour. This literature review aims to identify common findings, prevalence rates, contributing factors, and potential barriers to help-seeking among military personnel. Numerous theories have been presented in attempts to explain the phenomenon of sexual violence within the military. Examples include: an emphasis on hyper-masculinity and the privileging of traditional ‘male’ attributes above traditional ‘female’ attributes, conditioned obedience and isolation from external perspectives and support, and implicit sanctioning of violence and aggression. The literature also features a range of perceived barriers to help-seeking (particularly for male victims), such as shame, embarrassment, negative expectations of the reporting process, and fear of unwanted consequences.

Methods

Literature Collection

Search Strategy
The majority of the literature included in this review was identified using EBSCOhost, with additional searches in ProQuest Social Science Journals and through library searches. The initial search was centred on harmful sexual behaviour and military culture, but was then expanded to source further information on topics such as comparative statistics of sexual violence, barriers to reporting, and the role of hyper-masculinity in sexual violence. In addition, the literature indicated parallels between concepts such as ‘betrayal trauma’ and the victim-perpetrator dynamics post-assault within the military, which precipitated a new search avenue for research for inclusion in this review. Finally, the applicability of the majority of results was limited to female victims, so a further search was conducted to explore males’ experiences of sexual victimisation within the military. The initial Boolean search terms were military OR defence_force AND sexual_violence OR abuse OR violence. Once expanded, additional search terms included military AND sexual* AND reporting, and
military OR defence AND sexual_violence AND males OR men. Relevant works cited within this literature were then entered into Google Scholar and sourced.

**Selection Criteria**
Literature regarding non-Western defence force problems with interpersonal violence was excluded on the premise that the findings are less likely to be applicable to a New Zealand context. Studies with the sole focus of contrasting methods of treatment were also excluded, on the basis that they were irrelevant for a review aimed at generating an overview of knowledge about the dynamics, causes, general effects, and prevention initiatives for harmful sexual behaviour in the military. Finally, research published prior to 2005, unless it offered substantively different findings or gave necessary historical context, was excluded.

**Search Outcomes**
Collectively, the multi-database searches yielded 877 results, of which 78 appeared superficially relevant on the basis of title. After screening of publishing dates, replication, and abstract content, 28 were subsequently excluded. An additional seven resources were found through a university library search, four through grey literature searches, and four by searching in reference lists of selected texts, resulting in a total of 65 resources.

**Literature Analysis**
The literature was organised thematically, with key findings grouped according to sub-topics and synthesised.

**Results of Literature Search**
A meta-analysis of studies and results regarding prevalence rates, effects, risk factors, and experiences of help-seeking is made difficult by the level of divergence in methods of recruitment, definitions, data analysis, and inclusion criteria in relation to time-frames (Morris et al., 2013; Turchik & Wilson, 2010). However, it is apparent that both quantitative and qualitative methods have produced valuable data about respondents' experiences of harmful sexual behaviour, and that surveys (predominately self-administered), followed by interviews, are the most common method used to collect information. Quantitative analyses have developed prevalence rates based on studies with
large numbers of participants; for example, Holland, Rabelo, & Cortina (2014) administered a survey to over 90,000 active service personnel, controlling for gender, rank, type of service, and ethnicity. Specifically, they were asked whether they had experienced sexual contact within the last year (including sexual touching, digital penetration, attempted sexual intercourse, and sexual intercourse) that they did not consent to. In addition, they were asked about their experiences of training, knowledge of sexual violence reporting policies, and perceptions of training effectiveness (Holland, Rabelo, & Cortina, 2014). Questions varied between studies; for instance, in Mengeling et al’s (2014) study, servicewomen who disclosed sexual assault were asked about their experiences of reporting, whether they felt believed, whether personal responsibility was implied, or whether (and why) they had chosen not to report. Conversely, O’Brien et al (2008) used clinician-administered surveys that included the Trauma Symptom Checklist-40 (TSC-40) to assess the differences between male and female experiences and symptomatology.

Mailed out invitations and recruitment flyers (both of which resulted in a very low response rate), invitations to participate through internally publicised advertisements, snowball sampling, and invitations from external service providers were used to recruit participants (Cheney et al., 2015; Holland, Rabelo, & Cortina, 2004; Kimerling et al., 2007; Lipari & Lancaster, 2003; Mengeling et al., 2014; O’Brien, Gaher, Pope, and Smiley, 2008).

The majority of literature available on harmful sexual behaviour is from the United States, focuses predominately on military women’s experiences, and profiles serving personnel as typically young, white, healthy adults (Morris et al., 2013; Turchik & Wilson, 2010; US DoD, 2004). According to the United States Department of Defence (2004), most serving personnel are volunteers, mostly male, and with a substantive proportion being aged between 17 and 24.

Findings from the literature were classified into six main sub-topics, including prevalence rates, the effects of harmful sexual behaviour, the role of military culture in the perpetration and suppression of harmful sexual behaviour, risk factors for victimisation and perpetration, experiences of help-seeking and potential barriers to reporting, current initiatives and strategies, and
recommendations. Despite a wealth of data exploring the psychological, emotional, and physical effects of harmful sexual behaviour, there is a significant gap in the literature regarding effective mechanisms for both prevention and post-assault support; however, the extent to which defence organisations have conducted internal, unpublished research on such topics is unknown.

Findings from Literature Review

Defining and Measuring Harmful Sexual Behaviour
The term ‘military sexual trauma’ (MST) is used throughout much of the literature and international policy regarding the spectrum of sexually violent behaviours that occur within the military. While the term harmful sexual behaviour is employed throughout this Review as it is deemed more accessible to a range of audiences, it denotes the same set of behaviours and experiences as the term ‘military sexual trauma’. The United States Department of Veterans’ Affairs (2015) explains military sexual trauma as:

“Any sexual activity where a Service member is involved against his or her will -- he or she may have been pressured into sexual activities (for example, with threats of negative consequences for refusing to be sexually cooperative or with implied better treatment in exchange for sex), may have been unable to consent to sexual activities (for example, when intoxicated), or may have been physically forced into sexual activities. Other experiences that fall into the category of MST include unwanted sexual touching or grabbing; threatening, offensive remarks about a person’s body or sexual activities; and threatening and unwelcome sexual advances. The identity or characteristics of the perpetrator, whether the Service member was on or off duty at the time, and whether he or she was on or off base at the time do not matter. If these experiences occurred while an individual was on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty for training, they are considered by VA [Veterans’ Affairs] to be MST”

Prior studies report prevalence rates of women soldiers being raped while in active service as ranging from 9.5% to 33% (Bostock & Daley, 2007; Coyle, Wolan & Van Horn, 1996; Murdoch, Pryor, Polusny & Gackstetter, 2007; Salder,
Booth, Nielson & Borman, 2007). Sexual assault rates of males while in active service are unclear, as the studies into men’s experiences of victimisation included in this literature review do not specify whether experiences of sexual assault occurred prior to, during, or subsequent to their military service (see Krinsley et al., 2003; Murdoch et al., 2007; Smith et al., 1999). However, studies carried out on help-seeking veterans in the United States found that 1% to 4% of all recruits reported difficulties stemming from sexual assaults that occurred during their service (Kimerling et al., 2007; Murdoch et al., 2004., Murdoch et al., 2007). Weitz (2015) notes that these prevalence rates should be considered extreme when compared to general rates, given that they only cover a specific time period rather than lifetime prevalence rates as is typical of civilian research. Lipari and Lancaster (2003) also found that each year, 1% of serving males and 3% of serving females were sexually assaulted within the military (with sexual assault being defined as actual or attempted rape, sodomy, and indecent assault).

Findings of prevalence are generally higher when the sample is restricted only to help-seeking veterans; for example, 33% to 43% of women seeking help from veteran assistance services reported distress relating to their experiences of rape and sexual assault during their military service (Fontana & Rosenheck, 1998; Street, Gradus, Stafford, & Kelly, 2007; Suris et al., 2007). However, reporting rates for each section of the military are not necessarily indicative of incidence rates, given the potential for different barriers to reporting to exist in each service (Turchik & Wilson, 2010).

Studies have also concluded that rates of sexual violence victimisation prior to enlisting are substantially higher than rates of sexual violence among the civilian population (Bostock & Daley, 2007; Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1990; Rosen & Martin, 1996). For example, Merrill et al.’s (1998) study into female Navy recruits found that 45.5% had been subjected to attempted or completed rape since the age of 14, in comparison to the national average of 13% (Resick, 1993). The only study finding comparable rates of sexual violence histories between serving and civilian women also found a greater likelihood of perpetrators being family members, a greater duration of abuse, and higher rates of sexual revictimisation among military women (Schultz, Bell, Naugle, &
In addition, male recruits were found to have higher rates of perpetration compared to civilian males, with between 9.9% and 14.8% reporting having perpetrated a completed rape against a woman prior to enlisting (Merrill et al., 2001; Merrill et al., 1998). As with any studies into prevalence rates, the actual number is likely to be greater due to underreporting (Bachman & Taylor 1994; Kilpatrick et al. 1992), and the role of underreporting cannot be underestimated, since most studies are done by military-affiliated organisations, resulting in women distrusting the potential responses to their disclosures of sexual violence (Weitz, 2015).

**Effects**

Personnel who have been subjected to sexual violence within the military are likely to experience higher rates of anxiety, depression, chronic health complaints, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), sleep disturbances, eating disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, and suicidality than those not subjected to sexual violence (Harned et al. 2002; Kang et al. 2005; Kimerling et al. 2007; Martin et al. 2000; Sadler et al. 2000), as well as lower job satisfaction (Harned et al. 2002). Further, respondents who reported more types of sexual stressors had more depression and anxiety, and more severe PTSD and somatic complaints when compared with those who had fewer or no sexual stressors (Fraser, 2011). Enlisted personnel in the United States who are subjected to sexual assault during service are nine times more at risk of developing PTSD (Fraser, 2011).

Further, the psychological trauma for victims of sexual violence from within the forces may be exacerbated by the nature of the relationship with the offender, as they are typically comrades and continue to serve alongside their victims following the assault (Bell & Reardon, 2011).

In Weitz’s (2015) interviews with 25 participants, the fear of sexual violence, regardless of whether or not they had previously experienced it, featured more strongly than the descriptions of sexual assaults. Women also discussed incidences where they had to be hyper-vigilant to circumvent male personnel’s attempts to peep at them in the showers or sleeping quarters, and were expected to ‘just deal with it’ (Weitz, 2015). There were, however, exceptions to these fears of rape, with some women reporting that they felt their peers and superiors
were respectful of women, that these men would behave protectively toward them, and that they had well-developed intuition that they used to assess potential risk (Weitz, 2015). Benedict (2010) identifies parallels between sexual assault by comrades and the helplessness and betrayal trauma experienced by children who are victims of incest, and notes that this is particularly evident when the military discourages disclosure. Kimerling (2007) also argues that sexual trauma in the military is equal to or greater than the trauma recruits are potentially exposed to in active combat.

Weitz (2015) described women’s experiences of ‘near-assault’ as leaving them feeling vulnerable and re-arranging daily activities to reduce this perceived vulnerability. They were also preoccupied with presenting an image of themselves that would not be construed as ‘butch’ or ‘helpless’, in order to reduce the probability that they would become sexual targets (Weitz, 2015).

Kakhnovets and Holohan (2007) found numerous myths specific to male victimisation that increase stigmatization and psychological impact on victims, such as that men cannot be raped as they are better able to protect themselves, that only gay men can be raped, or that rape only occurs among criminal populations such as in prisons. Correspondingly, male victims may be met with less concern or empathy, and the offence may be considered less serious than if it was perpetrated against a woman (Davies, 2002). As with female victims, male victims may experience difficulties in trusting others, feelings of vulnerability and shame, and disruptions to sleep, health, and relationships (Kakhnovets & Holohan, 2007); however, they may disproportionately suffer from substance abuse and psychiatric problems following sexual victimisation (Coxell, King, Mezey, & Gordon, 2000; Kimmerling, Rellini, Kelly, Judson, & Learman, 2002; Ratner et al., 2003). The psychological sequelae also differs between male and female victims, with males being more likely to experience personality disorders, bipolar disorder, psychosis, and schizophrenia following assault than females (Kimmerling et al, 2010). The masculine stereotypes that are believed to underpin sexual assault perpetration may also inhibit males’ reporting of sexual assault, and exacerbate their experiences of shame and humiliation (particularly if they experienced a physiological response of sexual arousal during the assault)
as they struggle to reconcile imposed sexual experiences with the sexual autonomy and assertiveness expected of them as males (Kakhnovets & Holohan, 2007; Davies, 2002). Moreover, men are more likely to suffer from self-blame and self-recrimination for not overpowering the perpetrator, and, unlike female victims, are likely to question their sexual identity following assault as they question the legitimacy of their masculinity (Davies, 2002; Kakhnovets & Holohan, 2007; Tewksbury, 2007). Finally, they are less likely to report and therefore to receive the necessary support following assault, increasing the risk of post-traumatic stress (Kakhnovets & Holohan, 2007; Tewksbury, 2007).

The Role of Military Culture

The military is a uniquely structured social and organisational environment. Turchik and Wilson (2010) suggest that while the nature of training may be successful at developing soldiers with the necessary characteristics to engage in combat, it may also form the foundations for beliefs that are supportive of sexual violence. For example, Weitz (2015) posits that the military’s emphasis on in-house bonding and lack of external monitoring are breeding conditions through which sexual violence occurs and is sanctioned.

Hunter (2007) identifies such characteristics as including sexualised language and hyper-masculine culture, conditioned obedience irrespective of personal belief in the nature of the commands, and a strong group mindset that precludes bonding with people outside of the military. Hunter (2007) defines hyper-masculinity as “an extreme form of masculinity based on beliefs of polarised gender roles, a high value placed on control, power, and competition, toleration of pain, and mandatory heterosexuality” (p. 271). Mazur (2007), Henry, Ward, and Hirshberg (2004), and Harned et al (2002) similarly contend that the elevation of traditionally ‘masculine’ values of toughness and aggression, combined with the male-dominated nature of command structures, breeds a power differential between men and women that positions women as powerless objects of abuse or harassment. Moreover, these factors also increase the risk of male-to-male sexual victimisation, which is considered to be driven by the desire to prove superiority and dominance over the ‘weaker’ male (Scarce, 1997).
Stern (2009) further argues, “the fragility and indeed impossibility of militarized masculinity... requires continual concealment through the military institutional practices, and in the individual expressions of such masculinity” (p. 499). The tolerance of abuse by commanding officers that hold this mindset has also been linked to increased prevalence rates (Pryor, 1995). It is also argued that the dissonance between the stereotypes attributed to combat and the stereotyped conceptualisations of the female role ultimately leads to female personnel being targeted through sexual violence and harassment, in addition to other means, as a method of putting them in their place (Holland, Rabelo, & Cortina, 2014). Rosen and Martin (1998) explored the association between negative attitudes about women and tolerance of sexual violence in the military, finding that these beliefs were predictive of both perpetration of and acceptance of harassment and victimisation. Similarly, Weitz (2015) identifies four underlying societal beliefs that are supportive of sexual violence towards women and which are exacerbated within the promotion of ‘masculine’ characteristics inherent in military culture; namely, that women are physically vulnerable to male perpetrators, that they are incapable of protecting themselves without male oversight, that males who perpetrate sexual violence are ubiquitous, and that the women are responsible for inciting rape and therefore must avoid any behaviours that may be construed as inviting. Accordingly, Harned et al (2002) found that women of lower rank were significantly more likely to be subjected to sexual violence (often by their superiors).

According to Holland, Rebelo, and Cortina (2014, p. 290), “the idealized soldier is tough, fearless, and unwavering; this image is more in line with stereotypical masculinity (e.g., assertive, strong) than femininity (e.g., sensitive, fragile)”. This is reiterated by Weitz (2015), who identifies military values as aligning with traditionally ‘masculine’ attributes of competitiveness, dominance, and risk-taking, and views sexual assault and harassment as a “natural outgrowth of masculinist military culture’s valorisation of hyper-masculinity and associated denigration of women” (p. 169).

Enloe (2000) reasons that the commonly perceived root cause of male sexual violence as biologically driven largely sanctions the normalisation of sexual
violence and harassment towards women by explaining it as a by-product of normal male sexual desire, in much the same way that the use of prostitution rings around deployments were unofficially sanctioned for serving men. Callahan (2009) also refers to the ‘socius’ aspect of military culture, suggesting that the striving toward a masculine, tough warrior breeds acceptance of violence and aggression, while reinforcing traditional ‘masculine’ values. This training also poses an identity crisis for women, who are forced to unlearn their operant conditioning from their lives prior to enlistment, in order to meet the expectations set by this military culture, which can then lead to role conflict when they are once again placed in a feminine and sexually objectified role by male soldiers, leading to an internalisation of powerlessness (Williams & Burnstein, 2011). This is reiterated by Callahan (2009), who suggests that the very process of training, insofar as it involves the stripping of individual identities in order to recreate recruits’ roles as elite soldiers simultaneously renders them powerlessness, increasing the risk of these individuals attempting to regain their power. For males, this may be achieved through overpowering women.

Other Risk Factors
As with general sexual assault statistics, characteristics associated with social marginality are also associated with higher rates of victimisation; for example, being of a young age, being uneducated or from a low socio-economic background, belonging to an ethnic minority, and being in a position with lower levels of organisational power (Kimerling et al, 2007; Suris et al, 2007). In the general population, age is highly correlative to sexual victimisation, with approximately 83-87% of sexual offenders in one study aged between 17 and 24 (DoD, 2004). Exposure to prior victimisation through dating violence or child sexual abuse are also noted in the literature as risk factors for sexual victimisation while serving (DoD, 2004). Williams and Bernstein (2011) state that the three main risk factors for experiencing sexual violence in the military are being young, the involvement of alcohol, and a history of prior victimisation. Younger women, for example, have been repeatedly found to be at elevated risk of sexual violence (Hart, 2003; Perkins, 1997; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). The impact of earlier victimisation appears to be twofold: it can produce oppositional
and aggressive behaviours in males (such as assaulting women), and reduce self-
protective instincts in females (such as recognising situations of danger) (Corbett, 2007; Rock & Lipari, 2009).

The use of alcohol has also been repeatedly identified as a risk factor for any type of violence, and in particular sexual violence, both outside and within the military (Abbey, Clinton-Sherrod, McAuslan, US Department of Defense, 2004; Zawacki & Buck, 2003). This is intrinsically linked to perpetration of sexual violence in the military, since one fifth of military personnel report being heavy drinkers, and these are disproportionally recruits under age 25 (Bray et al., 1999a). Substance use has been associated with both victims and perpetrators (Abbey, 2002; Testa, 2002; DoD, 2005), with up to 50% in one United States study of sexual victimisation in the military involving alcohol use (DoD, 2004). A focus group conducted by the US Department of Defence (2004) identified that use of alcohol and other substances by young enlisted personnel is associated with initial feelings of independence, peer socialisation, and opportunities afforded by close quarters.

As with studies into fear of sexual violence amongst civilians, interpreting the self as vulnerable to sexual assault reinforced personal fear of the assault occurring. For instance, during Weitz’s (2015) interviews with 25 personnel women reported that hearing stories about other assaults within the military, sexual harassment, or unsupportive officers significantly increased their fear of sexual violence, and that these conditions were further exacerbated by the characteristics of a masculine culture they experienced in the military. The beliefs conveyed by superior officers also influenced their perceptions of their own vulnerability; for instance, one woman reported that only the three women in her deployment were permitted to carry live weapons, as their commanding officer believed they were at risk of rape and wished to prevent it (Weitz, 2015). Being placed with unfamiliar personnel also led to some women feeling outside the ‘band of brothers’ and therefore more vulnerable to sexual violence (Weitz, 2015).
Help-Seeking and Barriers to Reporting

Mengeling et al (2014) investigated women’s decisions not to report, finding that the most commonly cited reasons were shame, not wanting others to see them in a different light after exposing themselves as ‘victims’, fear that insufficient proof may lead to disbelief, concerns about retributive actions by the offender, and negative consequences (for example, being punished for drinking themselves, or being treated negatively by colleagues or superiors). There were no distinctions found in decisions to report between age, ethnicity, deployment experience, or type of defence organisation (Mengeling et al., 2014). On the other hand, components of military structure may prevent victims from reporting harmful sexual behaviour, such as the expectation that they will need to continue working with the offender, that to report would disrupt the comradeship of the unit, and the belief that reporting may adversely affect career prospects (Frayne et al., 1999; Kimmerling et al., 2007; Suris & Lind, 2008). Moreover, despite institutional commitment to reducing or eliminating sexual violence, inadvertent barriers relating to rank, gender, anonymity, stigmatisation, and access to helping services may inhibit victims’ willingness to report and, correspondingly, the ability of the military to appropriately identify and respond to the problem of sexual violence (Morris et al., 2013; Williams & Burnstein, 2011). The culture of silence stemming from the ‘what happens here, stays here’ aspect of military culture is highly correlated to both low reporting rates and poor psychological outcomes among sexual violence survivors (Suris, 2008), however, this may be in part due to their continued association with perpetrators (Williams & Burnstein, 2011).

Many survivors within the military have perceived others’ reactions to their disclosures of sexual violence as ostracising, particularly in instances where the offender does not face any disciplinary action (Rock, Limpari, Cook, & Hale, 2011). In addition, accounts of others who have told their stories of being assaulted and faced negative ramifications act as a further deterrent to reporting (Rock, Limpari, Cook, & Hale, 2011). Sadler et al (2003) investigated top reasons for non-report of assault, and found that 79% of victims were concerned about negative impacts on their careers, and 77% were too embarrassed to report. Moreover, Weitz (2015) found that in some instances women were discouraged
from making a complaint, instead being advised by their senior officers that they would be branded as complainers and that no positive outcomes would result from their complaints. The unfortunate truth of this advice is further explained by Williams and Burnstein (2011), who point out that if a victim wants to access medical treatment or counselling, she can typically do this without a formal record being made of her name and experience; however, to report the offence means exposing her name and rank, which may lead to her becoming ostracised within her peer culture. This system “tacitly creates an atmosphere that perpetuates shame and isolates the victim, while making it difficult for perpetrators of rape to be punished” (Williams & Burnstein, 2011, p. 143).

**Current Initiatives and Strategies**

Military organisations have historically been slow to respond to reports of sexual violence (Holland, Rabelo, & Cortina, 2014). Despite evidence showing that prevention programmes addressing harmful sexual behaviour are most effective when they are participatory and involve robust discussion amongst participants, many defense organisations still provide, at best, standard delivery presentations that do not give participants the chance to interact and therefore challenge their own belief structures (Department of Defense 2013; Defense Manpower Data Center 2013a; Schmid 2010). The quality of delivery may be further hindered by the unwillingness of personnel in subordinate positions to participate openly in the training (Schmid, 2010).

Recently, the New Zealand Defence Force has looked at ways of improving conditions for women and maximising the recruitment of women. The New Zealand Ministry of Defence (2005) cites a ‘continuous momentum’ regarding applying policies about preventing and addressing harmful sexual behaviour across all forces. Of the goals set regarding gender equity, the 2005 report identifies only one goal was not met by the New Zealand Defence Force, - the monitoring of systems that collected data relating to bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Other goals, such as maximising the participation of women and implementing anti-harassment services, were all completed. The failure to meet that particular goal was attributed to inconsistent recording of abuse and harassment incidents, leading to unavailable data regarding prevalence and
severity of abusive incidents (NZDF, 2005). This is predominately due to instances where advisors have given informal advice that has not resulted in an official offence or investigation being recorded (Ministry of Justice, 2005), such as when a victim approaches a support person for informal, off-the-record advice before deciding on which actions to take.

While the NZDF states that it aims to recruit more women, the proportion of women enlisting has not significantly increased in recent years (Ministry of Defence, 2014). Even seemingly ‘harmless’ instances of sexual harassment can reduce women’s commitment to remaining in service. Women interviewed in the Ministry of Defence’s (2014) study described some instances of sexual bullying or harassment early in their careers, which was highlighted as a potential factor in low rates of retention for female personnel. The study also showed that personnel in lower ranks are much more likely to experience bullying or harassment (Ministry of Defence, 2014). At present, surveys are regularly undertaken in New Zealand defence services to ascertain levels of harassment or bullying, but do not differentiate between sexual and other types of harassment or bullying. Over the past six years, women have consistently reported substantially higher levels of harassment than men (approximately 10 percent of women and five percent of men per year had been harassed), and these incidence statistics have remained stable throughout this time (Ministry of Defence, 2014).

**Recommendations from the Literature**

Suggestions from this literature review include defence organisations ensuring that all complaints are taken seriously, and that knowledge about policies concerning sexual violence are disseminated to all members of the military in the hope of ensuring that women feel confident to report harmful sexual behaviour when it occurs; and that defence organisations actively recruit and promote higher proportions of women (Weitz, 2015). Valente and White (2007) also recommend that clinicians working with military personnel incorporate routine screening for unwanted sexual experiences or harassment into their work with clients and ask specifically about whether they have experienced unwanted sexual contact or harassment, theorising that screening increases the rate of
help-seeking among victims. They further suggest that personnel repeatedly presenting with somatic or psychological complaints are questioned about their sexual experiences in an empathic and supportive way, given that victims often present with symptoms such as gastrointestinal, physical pain, and chronic health condition symptoms rather than with a disclosure of assault (Valente & White, 2007). They recommend that these questions be phrased in ways that are neutral and non-discriminatory; for instance, beginning with statements such as “because sexual trauma is so common, I usually ask about the following items when I see patients” (Valente & White, 2007, p. 263). Clinicians should expressly show empathy following disclosures, assure victims that they are not alone, that they were not responsible for the assault, that assault can be frightening regardless of the circumstances, and that it is normal to experience emotions such as anger, embarrassment, shame, and fear (Valente & White, 2007). Finally, Mengeling et al (2014) suggests focusing on processes to ensure confidentiality, holding offenders accountable, and investing in evidence-based violence prevention programmes.

Conclusion
The literature provides a comprehensive overview of the problem of sexual violence within the military, the hypothesised causes, and processes that may help or inhibit help-seeking for male and female victims. However, this is largely gathered from studies into defence forces outside of New Zealand, and the extent to which the findings are applicable to a domestic context is unknown. What is clearly evident from these studies, however, is that sexual violence is likely to be a significant problem in any defence force, and is also likely to be substantially underreported, leading to severe implications in terms of psychological well-being, performance, and retention of personnel. Factors believed to contribute to sexual violence within the military are highlighted, such as the overvaluing of traits such as violence, aggression, power, and control (those conventionally regarded as ‘masculine’), the isolation from external perspectives and the bonding within units (often through the use of alcohol), and the favouring of an ‘aggressive’ personality. While barriers to reporting and help-seeking have been extensively recorded (including emotional barriers, organisational barriers, and outcome-expectation barriers), the literature also recommends strategies for
effective prevention and response to harmful sexual behaviour – such as the active recruitment and participation of women, systematic screening for unwanted sexual experiences, and empathic, evidence-based responses to disclosure.
Methodology

Development of Research Design
Tiaki Consultants agreed to carry out the Review in conjunction with the Sexual Assault Prevention and Management Governance Group. Given the short time frame, it was agreed that ethics considerations would be overseen by the NZDF.

Participant Safety and Anonymity
A key consideration when designing participant recruitment methods was participants’ emotional safety and their anonymity. With a focus on participants’ safety, the Participant Information Sheet included information about the background to the Review, including the final use of the report (for prevention and training). It also specified that the participation of Air Force personnel was entirely voluntary, that the data would be stored for two years and then destroyed, and that the final report to the NZDF would include no identifying information. It also requests their consent to audio-tape and take notes. The form also included “Reviewer Profiles” of the two interviewers from Tiaki Consultants, contact details for the lead reviewer, and contacts for the NZDF Equity and Diversity Manager and the Assistant Chief of Air Force (Support). Finally, it outlined the limitations of the confidentiality the interviewers could hold (the interviewers could not keep confidential any disclosures that the participant may harm themselves or others, or any uninvestigated offences), as well as details of several external specialist sexual assault support agencies and personnel and contacts for internal support services.

The Consent Form (Appendix A) included a summarised version of the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B) excluding the support contacts.

Interviews
At the beginning of each interview the interviewers went over the contents of the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form before commencing the interview.
Participants

Participant Selection

Prior to the participant recruitment email being sent out to personnel, the Chief of Air Force sent out an email to all Air Force personnel encouraging their participation. An NZDF liaison person was assigned to the project and was able to locate and book suitable, discreet interviewing rooms and arrange catering for each of the five interviewing days, as well as assist the interviewers sign in at each base.

The reviewers used a combination of simple random sampling and purposive sampling. Simple random sampling is the random selection of potential participants from a larger pool, based on chance rather than intentional selection. Accordingly, the Air Force provided the reviewers with a sample pool comprising the contact details of over 2,000 personnel from the three main Air Force bases. The reviewers then used a random process to select participants and send out recruitment invitations and participant information sheets, with the aim of achieving equal numbers of female and male participants with representation from a wide range of ranks across the three main Air Force bases. Interview times were then allocated to the first 20 people who replied with an affirmative response, depending on whether they fit within the matrix of required interviewees (based on rank and gender). Purposive sampling was used for the final four participants, who were identified in advance by the NZDF as potentially being able to provide valuable data (such as people who had been supporters to a victim or victims of sexual violence). With their prior consent, their contact details were provided to the reviewers by the NZDF.

The initial selection round involved Tiaki Consultants sending out invitations to 60 Whenuapai personnel, 15 Ohakea personnel, and 15 Woodbourne personnel. While there was a rapid response and filling in of slots from Whenuapai, there was a very low response rate from the other two bases. In order to fill the interview slots, and being mindful that Air Force personnel were being invited to participate at very short notice, invitations to participate were sent to an additional 20 Whenuapai personnel and a total of 40 additional invitations sent to both Ohakea and Woodbourne. The NZDF also reinforced this invitation by
directing emailing all personnel on base at Ohakea, resulting in additional responses. In the end, 14 interviews were booked at Whenuapai, seven at Ohakea, and two at Woodbourne, (only one of the participants failed to turn up at their allocated interview time) and one interview took place off-base. An equal split of genders was achieved, and participants included a mixture of recent recruits, a range of ranks, and trades. Finally, an interview was conducted with the National Sexual Violence Survivor Advocate, Louise Nicholas, who had supported several women who had allegedly experienced sexual harm while within the Air Force.

**Ethics**
Ethics requirements were identified and met by an internal NZDF process.

**Informed Consent**
Prospective participants were given a participant information sheet, which outlined the purpose and process of the research and stipulated the limits to confidentiality. It was explicit in the recruitment invitation, the participant information sheet, and the consent form that participation was entirely voluntary and details about who did or did not participate would not be gathered by Tiaki Consultants or the NZDF.

**Confidentiality**
In addition to ensuring that interviews took place in a private room, material was safeguarded both physically and electronically. Consent forms and data are held in a locked filing cabinet in the Tiaki Consultants premises for two years, and interview notes are kept on a password-protected USB. A copy of the data is stored in an alternative office and remains under the same conditions as the original data set.

**Gender-Neutral Approach**
Throughout the Review, the reviewers have maintained a gender-neutral approach. From findings within previous literature on harmful sexual behaviour within the military, the reviewers recognised the potential for harm to be perpetrated against and by any gender. The reviewers did not want assumptions about the gendered nature of sexual harm to exclude potentially important findings. Despite efforts to remain gender-neutral data within this Review
exclusively describes only harmful sexual behaviours by men towards women. Because of the gendered nature of the data, the term ‘women’ has often been used within this report as opposed to more gender-neutral terms such as ‘victim’ or ‘person harmed’.

**Risk of Emotional Harm**
Talking about sexual violence has the potential to be unsettling and even distressing especially to those who have had such experiences. With these risks in mind, the NZDF was keen to have very senior and experienced therapists who had worked with those affected by sexual violence to conduct the face-to-face interviews. The Participant Information Sheet had the profile of interviewers, Dr Kim McGregor and Russell Smith, as well as extensive external and internal support services listed. Both interviewers ensured that each participant was aware of the services available to them.

**Data Collection**
The reviewers conducted structured interviews with each participant, with interview times ranging from 37 minutes to 120 minutes. Interviews were designed in a structured manner in order to focus the conversation on the issues most pertinent to the study. It was anticipated that as a sensitive topic, personal material was likely to emerge naturally throughout directed discussion about whether the participants thought sexual violence occurred within the Air Force. Both reviewers used an open and conversational interview style in order to facilitate participant comfort with the process and to invite the sharing of subjective experiences. An open style was also chosen to allow sufficient flexibility to capture unanticipated data. The interview questions were designed with substantial input from the Air Force.

Each interview was recorded, and began with checking that each participant was aware of the limitations of confidentiality, the external and internal support services available to them, and that they had signed their consent form.

**Data Analysis**
The reviewers used qualitative content analysis to analyse the data. This involved a two-tier approach to coding; first descriptive and then analytical. The first interview was coded and then cross-checked by each member of the
research team to develop a coding schedule. The rest of the interviews were then divided up between members of the research team and coded accordingly, with every third interview cross-checked to ensure consistency in coding. The text was then organised according to categories, sub-themes, and themes.
Findings

Interviews with participants generated a large amount of data regarding the dynamics of and responses to harmful sexual behaviour within the Air Force. Harmful sexual behaviours, while commonly believed (by male participants in particular) to be relatively rare, were reported as relatively common experiences at least amongst the women participants and caused them significant harm. While largely invisible because of difficulties in reporting, this harm was described by some participants as causing a ripple effect in their lives, impacting partners and friends. The perpetration of sexual harm within the Air Force appears to be underpinned by misogynistic, sexist attitudes and behaviours predominantly, but not always, focused on new female recruits and lower ranked women.

Despite what is considered a highly sexist culture, virtually all participants spoke about their pride in and commitment to the Air Force. Many male and female participants believed that any misogyny was in the past and that currently people with harmful sexual behaviours could not infiltrate Air Force ranks. Many also believed that Air Force culture was changing for the better and they were aware that the current leadership was working hard to improve it.

Perceptions of safety, lived experiences of harmful sexual behaviour, and opinions about causes and culpability varied significantly between participants. The gendered nature of the assessment of risk is not surprising given that women are much more likely to be obvious targets of sexual violence.

Five central themes were identified: 1) the foundations for harm, 2) how harm occurs, 3) disclosure and reporting, 4) justice and support; and 5) policies and training.

1) Foundations for Harm

Beliefs About Women and Victims

Throughout the interviews with male participants, there was significant adherence to rape myths – which are the set of socially sanctioned popular beliefs that position women as moral gatekeepers of sexuality, blame women for being assaulted, and excuse or justify men’s harmful sexual behaviour towards
women. Heavily gendered language and views of women and sex were apparent including women being accused of “crying rape.” Assertions that women had lied were held even when convictions were made in a court of law. There were contradictory views expressed. For example, acknowledging harm occurred when new recruits were targeted for sexual teasing and harassment but then attributing incidents to the inability of young women to handle or avoid men’s harmful sexual behaviours as the young women being ‘naïve’. The onus for managing risky situations appeared to be put on women who were harmed, with them being referred to counselling, to teach them how to keep themselves safe and learn how to be unaffected by harmful sexual teasing, rather than using an intervention that tried to alter the men’s inappropriate behaviours.

In general, strategies women developed to ‘keep themselves safe’ seemed to be limited to changing their own behaviours; namely, leaving a risky situation, or trying to stay close to other people who may be able to protect them – in some cases other women, in other cases men.

When some women did complain to the organisation about sexual harassment however, they seemed to frequently face disbelieving or blaming reactions which deterred those harmed from being willing to report the harm further.

A lack of understanding of the profound impact of harmful sexual behaviour, and the difficulties in reporting by those who have been harmed was evident with suspicion about the motives of women seeking help being raised.

Participants mentioned that they believed disproportionately negative impacts to careers had occurred when it was discovered that complainants were either in relationships with superiors, or had been victimised by their superiors. Mostly their superiors faced no adverse consequences themselves.

**Beliefs About Men**

Men in the Air Force were seen as leaders and protectors by male participants, and by female participants as a combination of good colleagues, sources of risk and/or harassment, and as protectors.
Both men and women considered it unlikely that men would report being sexually harmed themselves on the basis that it would contradict their traditionally masculine values and the widespread belief that men are not sexually harmed. Beliefs were expressed that even if men were the victim of sexual assault they would not report it due to fears about damage to their reputations amongst their peers. Other reasons for men being unlikely to report sexual violence were assumptions that they would not receive a sympathetic response because of expectations of male toughness.

Several male and female participants spoke about the inherent expectation within military culture that men would try to have as much sex as possible, with as many different women as possible. It was suggested that sexual success with multiple partners was regarded as a positive trait in males, but a very negative one in females.

**Bystander Behaviour**

It seemed that male participants in this Review rarely took action when they witnessed sexual teasing or harassment unless the person who was being targeted was their partner or a colleague they were close to. Their willingness to intervene also appeared dependent on their perception of how harmful the behaviour was. For example, a male participant talked about sexual teasing and considered it to be harmless, yet later he stated that if it was his partner he would ‘step in and tell them it isn’t okay’.

**Sexual ‘Humour’**

Sexual teasing and gender-based teasing was generally regarded as acceptable, even though some women cited it as a reason for leaving the Air Force. Others regarded it as a signal that they were not safe with certain personnel. Several women reported that they were not bothered by sexist comments but it was also suggested that ‘outsiders’ would likely be shocked by some of the everyday banter. Derogatory comments or jokes towards women were seen as just part of the overall tough culture. At times this served as a personal safety warning for women to be cautious. Some female participants did speak about their
frustration at navigating the constantly sexualised or gender-biased workplace banter.

**Feeling Safe in the Air Force.**

There were several women who had not encountered any sexual harm themselves. Some also commented that the sexist comments they heard were “benign” or the men were “just joking” and that the comments didn’t bother them. It was suggested that some women encountered very similar sorts of behaviour in “civvy street” or in any university bar. Some women commented that they felt safer in the Air Force than they did in parts of rural and city life. This was in part because the Air Force was like a ‘family’ and also because men in the Air Force were often seen as quite protective of Air Force women. Women reported many occasions when some of their male colleagues ensured that they got home safely after a night of drinking without any harm at all – that they all “looked out” for each other.

In some cases self-blaming beliefs inhibited victims’ abilities to recognise that harm had been done to them, and their willingness to report it. In some cases, the way peers discussed sexual assaults contributed to the minimisation of the impact and harm caused by sexual assault.

In contrast, most males and some females believed there was an on-going positive cultural shift, indicating that the conditions were improving for women and that there was a concerted effort to ensure women’s inclusiveness.

**Defining ‘Harm’**

Conceptualisations of ‘harm’ varied significantly between participants. There were often contradictions between initial answers about sexual harm and subsequent descriptions which highlighted an inability to clearly differentiate between consensual and unwanted sexual behaviour.
Participants showed often-contradictory perceptions of levels of safety within the Air Force and appeared to be influenced by their desire to see their colleagues and their workplace as safe. Males seemed to show a higher confidence in women’s safety than females, with most initially expressing their confidence that women would be safe if they joined the Air Force, but later qualified their comments about women’s safety.

Some women participants spoke of their recent and historic experiences as new recruits when they were harassed, and on occasion sexually assaulted due to their gender, yet no one seemed to even talk about the harm, let alone address it. Some also believed that female recruits were universally subjected to sexually abusive experiences. However, many male and female participants spoke about their confidence that the Air Force was a safe place to work for all genders, when compared to overseas military forces.

**Risk Factors**

**Sexism**

Most participants identified the low proportion of women in the Air Force as a causal factor for an environment where sexual harassment, gender-based bullying, and sexual assault occurred. The reasons for the lack of women enlisted in the Air Force was viewed as a biological phenomenon (“it’s just that males tend to be more drawn to than females”), to wider population factors such as fewer women pursuing careers in engineering fields.

Some participants reported that they knew of women who had not been victims of sexual assault but who felt unable to continue working in the Air Force when it meant having to face regular gender-based harassment.

Most of the women interviewed reported a culture of on-going sexism that women would put up with for so long but “it wears you down”. It was stated that it would take “everyone in the Air Force to change the culture” and any change was likely to take “20 years.”

Some women described how senior colleagues “closed ranks” when there was an accusation of sexual harassment or sexual assault. In contrast to this several women, commented that they believed “things were improving” and that the
executive were “trying hard” to change the anti-women culture, and that negative beliefs about women are not held universally within the Air Force.

**Career stage/Age**

Age and stage of career appeared to have both risk and protective factors in relation to experiences of sexual harm. Those of lower rank and who were relatively new to the Air Force were seen as potentially more at risk of being harmed than those who were of higher rank and who had served a number of years in the Air Force. In addition, men with higher ranks and greater experience within the Air Force were sometimes seen by participants as having more power and influence to gain access to women. Moreover, their increased rank and role-based authority was also seen as deterring bystanders, (especially those of lower ranks) from reporting harm. A female participant spoke about the unwillingness of female recruits to speak out about sexual violence they experienced at the beginning of their careers. Some participants consistently spoke about the challenges of intervening, or of having complaints upheld, when the person with the harmful sexual behaviour was highly ranked.

Senior male participants mostly attributed any risk of sexual harm to young, junior males. Conversely, both junior and senior female participants indicated that it was often older males, and particularly those in senior command roles, that exhibited anti-female attitudes and perpetrated harmful behaviour toward females.

**Alcohol**

Almost all participants identified the misuse of alcohol as a contributing factor in risky sexual situations and harmful behaviour. Drinking alcohol was also associated with sexual humour and with gender-based jokes, although many felt that this was harmless. It was reported that new recruits, once in their new trade, are encouraged to drink a lot and this had been a contributing factor in women being subjected to unwanted incidents of sexually harmful behaviour.

Many did emphasise the substantial shift in drinking culture over the past decade, and associated this with a safer drinking environment. Positive changes given included some restrictions to happy hour, the requirement to provide food
along with alcohol, and earlier closing hours. It was reported that these changes are not always adhered to however, and that there were inconsistencies between bases. Several women said that any time alcohol was involved there was a greater risk to them and other men in terms of sexual harassment and/or physical aggression so they tended to avoid bars.

**Other Situations**
Other situations mentioned as being particularly risky for women were male-dominated trades (such as engineering and technical trades), initiation rituals (sometimes sexualised, and typically accompanied by group/peer pressure) that take place at sports events, and sometimes on deployments.

There were also comments about believing (erroneously) that people with harmful sexual behaviours could not get through the employment screening, or rigorous psychological testing required to be able to be recruited into the upper ranks

*Sexist Infrastructure*
Unisex toilets, bathrooms and changing areas for example in barracks were reported by several participants as making women feel uncomfortable and vulnerable. Several reported feeling exposed “just wearing a towel” to the bathroom and being seen by male colleagues. The alternative was to go to and from the bathroom “fully clothed” which the women reported as inconvenient. It was suggested that this could be dealt with by issuing all personnel with bathrobes that they were required to wear between their room and the shower. Some women did not appreciate seeing semi-naked men walking to and from the unisex bathrooms. It was acknowledged that the showers were vastly improved now that there were doors that could be closed. Shower curtains often had gaps in them and women had felt vulnerable to being seen and ‘peeped’ on. Women in particular reported that they would prefer not to have to share showers and toilets with the men.

The difficulties for women travelling with a large number of male personnel was raised. Being the only woman in a confined space with a large group of males
sharing unisex toilets and having to attend to personal hygiene matters where there is little in the way of personal privacy was found to be very difficult.

On deployment and working in the field some women reported going to extraordinary lengths to maintain privacy or to reduce their need for toileting in order to maintain their dignity, reduce embarrassment and vulnerability to sexual harassment.

2) How Harm Occurs

Participants’ Experiences

Participants conceived harm as something that occurred out of individual or societal deficits. Some participants did reflect on their own behaviour and the potential for it to have been construed as harmful. For example when an individuals personal space was invaded, they often felt like the person doing the harm was protected, and often protected by the alleged offender’s superior(s).

Most of those disclosing harm felt that not every person involved in the case took them seriously. Some participants spoke of how the lack of action to stop the person harming, allowed the behaviour to continue and even escalate over time.

There were several complaints from those who experienced harm, that the Air Force did not offer sufficiently expert support subsequent to their disclosures, despite them having access to Chaplains/Padres, psychologists, doctors, welfare officers, and anti-harassment advisors. Some frustrations were raised that many of the support personnel lacked specialist experience to assess and manage incidents of harmful sexual behaviours. The lack of expertise in some cases seemed to have prolonged the harm which was experienced.

A few women participants talked of other women and how their complaints had been handled. This led them to conclude that making a complaint was either a waste of time or, worse, that their career could suffer further if they spoke out. It was reported that women wouldn’t report any sexual harm because of the fear of backlash including victim-blaming and that if they made a complaint their “career would be stalled”, they would be “down-graded”, or they could be “posted to a horrible job”. Participants also commented that some who found their situations hopeless subsequently left the Air Force.
Effects of Harmful sexual behaviour

The effects of harmful sexual behaviour were extremely far-reaching, and impacted those directly affected as well as their families, partners, and supporters. On occasion, those harmed felt the need to hide their trauma responses after experiencing harmful sexual behaviour with some leaving the Air Force.

3) Disclosure and Reporting

Immediate Support and Acknowledgment
The experiences of people reporting being harmed were overwhelmingly negative especially if the harmer was a superior. They often felt like the person doing the harm was protected.

Most participants were concerned about confidentiality as a barrier to reporting. It was believed that once something happened on the site ‘everyone’ would know because so many people have connections with each other. This was reinforced in other discussions.

Both male and female participants reported hearing disclosures of sexual violence in their capacity as friends, partners, or colleagues. Upon hearing about the harm, some of their responses included anger, discomfort, and uncertainty about how best to respond. All indicated a wish to better know how to respond in situations where they witnessed or heard about harm being done. It was suggested that people receiving disclosures of harm were often unable to acknowledge the victim’s experience which was sometimes due to the discomfort involved in hearing the disclosure.

Lack of impartiality was one of the biggest concerns especially for complainants resulting in them being stigmatised and ostracised. A lack of confidence in superiors to handle complaints adequately also affected decisions to report.
Equally, there were beliefs (usually from those who had not experienced sexual assault) that the Air Force services would handle all sexual assault complaints professionally and appropriately. Complainants not only expressed concerns about reporting for their own reputation, but also for the harmer’s family.

Participants also spoke about how they would ideally like disclosures of harm to be handled. Both male and female participants commonly cited ‘something being done’ as one of the most important components of any response to a disclosure of harmful sexual behaviour. Acknowledgement of the harm, particularly for the complainant was viewed as vital to their recovery. A few complainants felt the harm to them was acknowledged.

Often it seemed to the complainant that getting the reporting process right or protecting the image of the Air Force was the priority for the chain of command. Some women harmed mentioned that balancing support for the person harmed with fairness to the person doing the harm in an employment setting was difficult. It seemed some seniors and some colleagues struggled to support both parties.

**Counselling Support**

Counselling was frequently mentioned as an essential part of an ideal post-disclosure process. It was considered important that victims would choose the counsellor and feel safe with them, and that the counselling would have to be part of a separate and entirely confidential process. Helpers also recognised the importance of training in basic counselling skills prior to talking with those who had experienced sexual violence.

Some participants reported that the most helpful responses were not necessarily from professionals or superiors, but were often from colleagues or people hearing disclosures. These were the people who really listened to what the complainant had to say without judgment or without giving directions.

In addition to receiving an immediate supportive response, other practical methods of support for both the complainant and their chosen support person were also identified as being a way to manage the immediate distress and minimise long-term effects. For example, being given time off work to deal with
the situation. Practical support like this was viewed as helpful as it enabled the immediate impacts of trauma to be addressed in a timely and sensitive manner.

Finally, fairness was regarded as an essential consideration in all response processes. Participants recognised that the rights of the accused to be given the chance of a fair investigation and the right to privacy while being investigated was important. However most considered that fairness and the right to privacy should be secondary to ensuring safety for the person who had been harmed.

**Barriers to Reporting**

Participants cited several barriers to reporting sexual harm. The first was rank. Those who reported experiencing sexual harm felt that the seniority of the people doing the harm could detract them from reporting in two ways. Firstly, because of the relative power of the superior, the complainant may not be believed and others would be too fearful of the implications of challenging the person with the higher rank to speak up. Secondly, it was felt that the person with the higher rank would escape without any punishment, making reporting seem hopeless. Additional obstacles were identified, including the fear that their own careers would be adversely affected as a result of their complaints, and the belief that reporting could harm their reputations and damage their career prospects. People were also deterred from reporting harmful sexual behaviour because of victim-blaming attitudes, including the fear that people would blame them for not reacting defensively enough during the assault, or reporting it quickly enough. It appears from comments made that many of these fears were well founded. Finally, several commented that they did not want to be labelled by others as a ‘victim’. The term ‘victim’ appeared to be largely regarded as synonymous with being a ‘problem person’.

4) **Justice and Support**

**Challenges Managing People with Harmful Behaviour**

Women who had been subjected to harmful sexual behaviour expressed frustration with the management of the person who had harmed them. It was perceived that friendships in the senior ranks, such as between the person causing harm and the person’s manager, prevented incidents from
being properly handled including incidents where there was victim-blaming and sexist comments by the senior ranks. Some women who experienced sexual harm reported that they did not want to make a complaint but did want the person with the harmful sexual behaviour to be monitored to ensure that the harmer wasn't able to harm others.

It was considered important to ensure that the complainant and harmer did not work in close proximity where they might meet. This separation did not appear to always happen which gave the impression that the on-going safety of the complainant was not taken seriously.

Several participants were also keen to ensure that those helpers and seniors who were likely to have to deal with disclosures of sexual harm were trained to know how to manage the complex needs of the complainant, as well as the rights of the accused, and refer each party to appropriate expert support.

**Not Dealing With Repeat Offenders**

People who repeatedly caused harm without having to face disciplinary action were a serious concern for several participants. Several participants (male and female) felt that if some people with harmful sexual behaviour had been challenged earlier, subsequent episodes of harm could have been avoided.

Participants pointed to examples of where women complainants were not believed or the senior did not act on the complaint and subsequent reoffending occurred. Some participants reported giving up trying to make those with harmful sexual behaviour accountable and decided to try to focus on managing their own risk of encountering those with harmful sexual behaviours. Some complainants became resigned to the inaction around perpetration of the harmful sexual behaviour and began to view the Air Force as having a culture in which no-one was able to challenge on-going and escalating harm either in the past, or into the future. These experiences influenced decisions being made about leaving the Air Force for their own safety.

**Internal Versus External Services**

The most often-mentioned source of formal support for complainants was access to NZDF anti-harassment advisors (AHA’s). The participants' assessments of the
advisors’ services were mixed and included some very negative comments about their credibility and capability which affected levels of trust however other participants appreciated the support from the AHA but were not satisfied with the lack of action towards those with harmful sexual behaviours.

Other pathways within the Air Force for reporting and support were also considered to have pitfalls, often regarding consistency. Both the Military Police and the New Zealand Police were well regarded by many participants (usually those who had not experienced any harm). These participants expressed confidence that they would respond appropriately.

When the participants were asked if they would prefer internal or external support for cases of harmful sexual behaviour, each support pathway was seen as having various benefits and limitations. Internal supports were seen as having the benefit of ‘understanding’ Air Force culture and therefore lessened the need for the person seeking support to explain it, but had limitations of confidentiality, impartiality and sometimes quality. External supports were often seen as having the advantages of anonymity, quality, and impartiality but lacked understanding of Air Force culture, particularly the rigorous hierarchy and rules military personnel lived with every day - which could have an influence on the support offered.

The National Sexual Violence Survivor Advocate (NSVSA) interviewed within this review had received several disclosures of harmful sexual behaviour from women who had left the Air Force and others who were still within it. The reports provided important experiences to include in this Review. For example, the advocate reported that her initial experiences of working alongside the Military Police (MP) on investigations of sexual assaults were that they lacked a victims’ perspective. The advocate is now part of training the MP and reports that the MP’s work with victims’ of sexual harm seems to be improving.

5) Policies and Training
Participants across a number of ranks spoke about the inadequacy of policies in the event that they had to deal with a disclosure or situation of harmful sexual behaviour.
There were a number of comments about problems with processes following the reporting of harm including inaccurate paperwork, inadequate investigation processes, knowing what to report and appropriate people to report to.

Participants also commented on the value that there would be in having all ranks trained in how to prevent sexual harm - including the need for bystander intervention training, and dealing with disclosures of sexual harm, including how to guide colleagues to the best supports for them following sexual harm.

**Limitations of the Findings**

The interviews yielded substantial quantities of data to be analysed and consequently many themes and categories that could form the basis of analysis were not able to be completed within the five-week timeframe from data collection to the completion of the report. Given time constraints and relative homogeneity of data, it was necessary to prioritise the themes that appeared the most prevalent, harmful, and distressing; namely, sexist culture and its relation to women’s experiences of harmful sexual behaviour, problems with and processes around disclosure and reporting of sexual harm, and practices and policies affecting both individuals’ experiences and the seeking of justice.

**Discussion**

**Dynamics of Abuse**

Some participants showed an inability to fully differentiate between harmful sexual behaviour and consensual sexual activity. Moreover, participants outlined compelling reasons for not disclosing or reporting harmful sexual behaviour.

Several participants recognised the harm that sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape had had on one or more of their colleagues. However, male participants in general did not seem to recognise the extent to which some female personnel were affected by a culture that was tolerant of sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour in their everyday lives. Perceptions of safety varied with male participants believing the Air Force was generally safe, while many female
participants took numerous steps each day in their work environments to reduce their vulnerability to harm.

When sexual assault did occur in the Air Force, the effects on the person harmed included emotional distress, anxiety, disrupted relationships, and intention to leave work. There were also findings of instances in which it was felt to be safer to agree to sex (especially if the perpetrator was of a higher rank), than to risk their safety by refusing. In addition, verbal sexual harassment appeared to be normalised, particularly amongst the men, and this significantly impacted some women’s feelings of safety and their commitment to remaining in the Air Force. While no men disclosed having been sexually harmed within this Review it should not be construed as confirmation that men are not being sexually harmed within the Air Force as there are additional barriers for males.

**Conditions that Allow Abuse to Occur**

It seems from the findings in this Review that current Air Force culture, policies, infrastructure, and procedures appear to have allowed several of those with harmful sexual behaviour to continue to cause harm to several victims without interruption or sanctions.

There is evidence of obstacles preventing those who have been harmed from reporting the harm and therefore precluding actions that will ultimately end the escalating harmful behaviour. There are also findings that demonstrate there is widespread tolerance and minimizing of incidents of sexism, sexual harassment and sexual assault, the implicit sanctioning of victim-blaming attitudes and a lack of attention to gendered needs and risks.

**Tolerance of Sexism and Associated Harm**

Many of the female participants reported older males in particular exhibiting anti-female attitudes demonstrated by their derogatory remarks about women’s sexual interactions, commenting about women’s lack of suitability for the Air Force, and the women’s comparative inferiority especially in their physiological differences to men. Some women participants also complained about younger males behaving in similarly sexist and harmful ways as older males. Complaints about younger males’ sexist behaviour is consistent with the international literature; however, complaints about older males is divergent to the findings of
previous authors, who concluded that younger recruits were more likely to exhibit harmful attitudes about gender and, accordingly, perpetrate harmful sexual behaviour (DoD, 2004; Williams & Bernstein, 2011).

Findings in this Review study included that the comparative seniority of people harming often precluded others from speaking up against harmful sexual behaviour. Typically, the same men were more likely to respond with victim-blaming comments to disclosures of abuse, or to disbelieve those reporting the victimisation. Rosen and Martin's (1998) finding that negative attitudes about women were highly associated with the acceptance of harmful sexual behaviour is therefore extremely relevant in considering both responses to harmful cultures, and initiatives to increase reporting. Enloe (2000) also noted an association between acceptance of sexual and gender-based teasing and harmful sexual behaviour which supports the belief that incidents of mistreatment or harassment of women are somewhat normalised.

**Lack of Attention to Gendered Needs**
Women in the study often attributed their feelings of vulnerability to the Air Force infrastructure that positioned them in close everyday living quarters with male personnel. Feeling vulnerable to ridicule and embarrassment and having to manage their own personal safety created difficulties.

**Sanctioning of Victim-Blaming Attitudes**
Reports made showed that in some instances, offending was extremely minimised and women complainants were made to feel as if they were overreacting. Comments about the motives of complainants in reporting such as gaining extra time off also highlighted a common belief that women's experiences of harmful sexual behaviour were not serious, were caused by their own behaviour (being naïve or drunk), or may not be entirely true. These beliefs were further evidenced by examples of flawed handling of reports of harmful sexual behaviour.

In this study, complainants disclosing abuse overwhelmingly reported that they were not believed, that they weren't taken seriously, and that their needs were seen as secondary to the needs of the person doing the harm. This is consistent with previous literature (see Mengeling et al., 2014) regarding military women's
choices not to report harmful sexual behaviour. This Cultural Review highlights the need for victim-blaming attitudes to be universally addressed, as the fear of disbelief or blame is sufficient to deter people who have been harmed from reporting, which can result in ongoing harmful behaviour.

**Problems with Reporting**
Rank, concerns about confidentiality, implications for the person's career, inconsistent responses, and stigmatisation all acted as significant deterrents to reporting experiences of harmful sexual behaviour. These factors may create a cyclical phenomenon where underreporting reinforces inadequate responses, and inadequate responses can fuel the underreporting of harmful sexual behaviours. Participants readily supplied instances in which they or other women were sexually harmed, were blamed for the harm, had their confidentiality broken, were ostracised by their peers, and had evidence matters mishandled and initial complaints minimised. The effects of these issues may be twofold: they may prevent those harmed from feeling supported to achieve justice, and they may teach other personnel that harmful behaviours will not be punished and that seeking support is futile. All of these factors are likely to impact upon the retention of women within the military. Finally, breaches of confidentiality and a lack of knowledge about correct handling of complaints create an uneven pattern of responses to harm.

Participants highlighted several immediate problems when those with harmful sexual behaviours were not sanctioned or removed from working within the Air Force. It was suggested by one participant that a ‘not guilty’ verdict in a crime of sexual violence did not necessarily mean that there was no harm caused but rather that the harm could not be proven. Concerns were also raised about victims having to continue to work with the perpetrator as it re-traumatised victims who had already been harmed. Moreover, some participants commented that if the harmer’s behaviour was part of an unrecognised pattern, and did not make it to disciplinary action, nor was reported to the NZ Police, the harmer could continue to harm without interruption.
**Colleagues as a ‘Family Unit’: Risks and Protection**

While many participants commented on the protective function of the Air Force ‘family unit’, it was also evident that there were characteristics of this ‘family’ setup that allowed sexual violence to occur. For example, there is obvious reluctance (particularly by male participants) to involve specialist civilian helping services in the problems suffered by Air Force personnel. Moreover, despite military law dictating that that all serious crimes are reported through the chain of command, decisions about which transgressions should be investigated or punished are made by the chain of command of the person causing the harm, rather than universally enforced. This is particularly concerning given that beliefs about what constitutes ‘harm’ varies from person to person, and that people in command positions are not exempt from holding flawed beliefs about harmful sexual behaviour. From descriptions of the management of disclosures and the mixed messages given to people reporting harm, it is obvious that ensuring uniformity in process and decision-making regarding reports of harm would require the establishment of a designated, impartial team, with clear policies on determining risk and response options.

**Retaining Female Personnel**

In addition to the effects of harm on individuals’ well-being, all activities on the spectrum of harmful sexual behaviour appeared to compromise the retention of women in the Air Force. While the vast majority of harm was not reported, and was often regarded as simply an occupational hazard inherent in working for the Air Force, it was strongly indicated to be a key reason for leaving or intending to leave.
Recommendations

Processes
A number of changes are indicated to ensure a reduction of harassment and harmful gendered teasing, to support victim well-being, and to improve interventions to stop on-going harmful sexual behaviour. Four key recommendations for policy changes emerged from the findings and discussion, and are listed in order of importance.

1. **Establish a new structure with oversight for the management and response of sexually harmful behaviour:** a range of issues regarding confidentiality, consistency, victim-blaming beliefs, reported inability of complainants to achieve justice and a low level of trust in the process for disclosing incidents of harmful sexual behaviour was identified. To ensure an efficient, accessible, coordinated and confidential response to people disclosing harm it is recommended that an independent, impartial, experienced unit/organisation be established with specialist training and agreed and transparent processes in order to protect disclosures. This would include a specialist response team with responsibilities for responding to initial reports of incidents and an expert team consulting each other to make joint decisions about key issues.

2. **Implement a hard-line approach to sexism as a key to a prevention strategy:** given the widespread reporting of harmful sexist attitudes and behaviours there is a strong case to be made for a whole-of-organisation cultural change that moves toward positively respecting women within its ranks and not tolerating harmful attitudes and behaviours toward female personnel from anyone. One way to ensure continued progression away from sexist behaviour is to instigate a hard-line approach at all levels throughout the organisation. Disciplinary consequences must result following inappropriate sexual conduct.

3. **Management of suspected and unreported sexual harm:** several participants in this Review expressed concern about cases of alleged sexual harm that were not reported, or where there were no clear interventions to stop the behaviour. There were also concerns that when
there had been a not guilty finding the person who allegedly caused the harm was able to continue working within the Air Force without any apparent restrictions. Most complainants were concerned for others who were likely to be harmed by the alleged harmer. To enhance the safety of all personnel, the Air Force may consider developing a way of gathering information that identified patterns or repeated concerns about an individual’s behaviour. There should also be routine arrangements to separate the person harmed and monitor the alleged harmer, regardless of the outcome of any complaint.

4. **Recruitment of women:** As evidenced in the literature review, having a higher proportion of female personnel is associated with lower levels of harmful sexual behaviour. There was an association between male-dominated trades within the Air Force and harmful sexual behaviour. It is clear that the increased recruitment and retention of women could be instrumental in precipitating a culture shift away from harmful sexual behaviour.

**Levels of Training**

Most participants supported the need for training to deal with sexual violence for all levels within the Air Force. The fact that most survivors of sexual violence first tell those they trust and who are closest to them, (such as their partners, close friends, or colleagues), supports the notion of training all personnel to be able to respond appropriately to disclosures of sexual violence. Participants also routinely spoke about not knowing enough about the dynamics, effects, and indicators of sexual violence, nor about how to respond to disclosures. Many participants did not know what they would do if they were in a situation where a colleague or subordinate disclosed a sexual assault to them - other than offer them the chance to talk to an anti-harassment advisor or the Padre. Training for all personnel in the basics of knowing how to respond and where to refer a person who disclosed a sexual assault to them is recommended. Training may include:

1. A ‘dealing with disclosures’ workshop delivered to all personnel.
2. Multi-module training in ‘responding to disclosures’ to be delivered to all personnel likely to be receiving disclosures.

3. Delivering screening for harm, and how to ask questions about sexual harm training to all health and support professionals, so those who have been harmed feel able to talk about their experiences.

4. Intensive and on-going training to be delivered to personnel holding specialist positions, who are likely to be the recipients of formal reports of sexual harm.

**Processes for Managing Risk**

Bathroom arrangements, sporting trips, alcohol availability and misuse, and deployment (especially when women are in the significant minority) were identified as potential risks for harmful sexual behaviours to occur. These situations should therefore be targeted for additional attention in order to reduce the potential for harm.

Consideration should be given to phasing out mixed barracks, bathrooms, toilets and changing rooms. Where mixed barracks exist, robes could be provided to lessen the exposure inherent in bathroom trips. Difficulties in attending to bathroom needs whilst on deployment should be considered and devices to aid women made appropriate usage of.

Rituals involving sexually suggested activities should be either completely banned, or limits placed upon.

Initiatives associated with host responsibility concerning alcohol, ensuring that opening hours are shortened, food (not just packets of crisps) is always available, and prices of drinks are not disproportionately low enabling the irresponsible use of alcohol should be considered.

Finally, the risks of deployment involving females when they are in the significant minority should be routinely considered, and arrangements made for the woman’s safety. This could involve the identification of a key person to oversee safety arrangements and ‘buddy’ with the woman (ideally, someone other than the woman’s commanding officer).
**Final Comments**

The leadership in the NZ Air Force and the wider Defence Force is to be commended for commissioning this Review and for expressing its commitment to preventing sexual violence from its organisation’s culture.

It is important that Air Force leadership take note of the significant amount of sexual harm reported, particularly by women in its organisation, within this Review.

Tiaki Consultants would also like to acknowledge and thank the participants who took part in this Review, for their bravery in speaking out about the sexual harm that they experienced or they were aware of occurring within the Air Force, and that they were extremely concerned about.

Several participants took part in this review in their own time. Many were motivated by wanting to stop others from experiencing the sexual harm they had experienced. They wanted to see a significant improvement in the current unsafe and ineffective responses to reports of sexual violence.

To achieve an Air Force that respects and values women is likely to require determined and focused leadership. It is also likely to take time. Continuing to improve a whole culture is likely to require not only changes from the ‘top down’ and from the ‘bottom up’, but also an integration of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention efforts woven throughout the entire organisation. When seeking to change a culture, most primary prevention approaches require a planned, phased and multi-layered approach.

Air Force values and leadership provide the NZ Air Force with significant opportunities for creating positive changes. Within this Review, it was clear that despite the many and significant reports of widespread sexual harm especially towards its women, most participants were proud to belong to their organisation. Expanding these already existing positive values, to include respectful attitudes and behaviours towards women, will help make the NZ Air Force a safer organisation for women.

As one woman who had reported significant sexual harm from a superior put it: “It's going to take everyone within the Air Force to change the culture”. 
References


experienced harmful sexual behaviour. The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 196, 252–255.


Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form

Your participation in an interview about Air Force culture surrounding sexual harassment and sexual assault is much appreciated. During the interview you will be providing information to Dr Kim McGregor or Mr Russell Smith of Tiaki Consultants Limited. Please provide your consent to participate by signing and dating this form. By signing this form you acknowledge your understanding that:

- The interviewer will collect information from you regarding the culture surrounding sexual harassment and sexual assault in the Air Force.
- The interviewer will either audio record the interview or take detailed notes and will retain the information for a period of two years unless the NZDF requests its earlier destruction.
- The information collected from you will be used to prepare a report that will be provided to Chief of Air Force on the culture surrounding sexual harassment and sexual assault in the Air Force.
- No identifying information will be used in the project report or automatically provided to the NZDF or any other organisation (with the possible exception of transcription services).
- If the resultant report reveals any un-investigated offences, the NZDF may access material to determine the identity of those interviewed and may further request the information collected in your interview for the purpose of investigating and prosecuting those offences.
- Your participation in the interview is entirely voluntary. You have not been required by the New Zealand Defence Force to participate in the interview or to provide any information and you may stop the interview at any time.
- You may access and correct any personal information held by Tiaki Consultants Limited.

Signed ……………………………………………………………………………………………

Name ………………………………………………………………………………………

Date ………………………………………………………………………………………
Appendix B: Participation Information Sheet

About the Air Force Culture Review (the Review)

The purpose of the Review is to gain a greater understanding of the Air Force culture surrounding sexual harassment and sexual assault. This will assist Chief of Air Force to effectively provide education, prevention strategies and initial response procedures in respect to sexual assault, and contribute to a safer organisation.

CAF has contracted Tiaki Consultants (Dr Kim McGregor and Mr Russell Smith) to conduct individual interviews with Air Force women and men. A short, anonymised report of findings will be submitted to CAF on 18 December 2015.

Tiaki Consultants have drawn potential interviewees from a sample of over 2000 personnel.

The interview

You will be asked a series of questions about specific topics. Your answers will be used to inform the prevention and management of sexual assault within the Royal New Zealand Air Force.

If you agree, Tiaki Consultants will audio-record your answers (otherwise they will note your answers).

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in the Review is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. The choice you make will have no bearing on your job or any work-related evaluation or reports. You may stop the interview at any time.

Disclosure of Sensitive Information

Your safety and privacy are important. The information collected from you will be held in confidence by Tiaki Consultants for a period of up to two years, at which stage Tiaki Consultants will destroy the information.
The topics discussed in the interview could potentially cause you distress. This information sheet includes information on the support services available within the NZDF and outside the NZDF.

**Duration**

The interview is likely to take between one and two hours.

**Interview Consent**

You will be asked to sign a consent form prior to commencing the interview. By signing the consent form you will acknowledge your understanding that:

- The interviewer will collect information from you regarding the culture surrounding sexual harassment and sexual assault in the Air Force.

- The interviewer will either audio record the interview or take detailed notes and will retain the information for a period of two years unless the NZDF requests its earlier destruction.

- The information collected from you will be used to prepare a report that will be provided to Chief of Air Force on the culture surrounding sexual harassment and sexual assault in the Air Force.

- No identifying information will be used in the project report or will be automatically provided to the NZDF or any other organisation (with the possible exception of transcription services).

- If the resultant report reveals any uninvestigated offences, the NZDF or other investigating agency may access material to determine the identity of those interviewed and may obtain the information collected in your interview for the purpose of investigating and prosecuting those offences.

- You may access and correct any personal information held by Tiaki Consultants Limited.

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**Reviewer Profiles: Who are we?**

Dr Kim McGregor has almost 30 years experience working with those affected by sexual violence. She has worked as a therapist, trainer, advocate and researcher. Kim is the author of ‘Surviving and Moving On’, a self-help book
for dealing with child sexual abuse. She is the Director of Tiaki consultants, a company that provides specialist sexual violence intervention services, including consultation, counselling, research and training. Dr McGregor was made a Companion of the Queens Service in 2014 for her services to the prevention of sexual violence.

Russell Smith is the co-founder and clinical co-Director of a leading community sexual violence treatment and prevention service. He is a specialist clinician and co-led a clinical team for over 15 years providing therapeutic services for children, adolescents and adults with harmful sexual behaviour. He is one of the advanced sexual assault (ASA) trainers to the senior New Zealand Police personnel. Russell is an active member of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abuse (ANZATSA) and executive paetakawaenga member of Te Ohaakii a Hine - National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together (TOAH-NNEST).

Contact Details

External Review Team Contact:

Lead Reviewer, Dr Kim McGregor, tiakiconsultants@gmail.com

Internal Contacts:

NZDF Equity and Diversity Manager, Ms Sue Russ sue.russ@nzdf.mil.nz

Assistant Chief of Air Force (Support), Group Captain Colin Marshall colin.marshall@nzdf.mil.nz

Disclosure of Classified Information

The interview process and questions are designed to seek unclassified information only. Classified information should not be disclosed during the interview. It is the responsibility of each participant to protect classified information.

Confidentiality
The findings of the Review will be reported to Chief of Air Force by 18 December 2015. Only aggregated data or unidentifiable quotes will be included in the report.

However if the report reveals any uninvestigated offences, the NZDF may access material to determine the identity of those interviewed and may further request the information collected in your interview for the purpose of investigating and prosecuting those offences.

The Reviewers themselves will not take any action in relation to the information they receive about any wrongdoing, unless they believe you or someone else is at significant risk of harm. If they perceive that there is a significant risk of harm they will talk with you before passing this information to the appropriate person (for example via the 0800 Mental Health line if there is a risk of self-harm, or via the Military Police if there is a risk of harm to someone else).

If you wish the NZDF to take action in regard to an issue, it is up to you to make an approach to the NZDF. You may wish to contact one of the people listed under Support Services to assist you in making a report.

Support Services

For specialist support regarding sexual assault, you are able to directly contact any of the following external service providers:

- Rape Crisis 0800 88 33 00 - national number 24/7
- Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP - 09 623 1700 - 24/7
- Nelson, Sexual Abuse Support and Healing (SASH) 03 548 2407 works with women and children.
- Nelson, Male Room Inc 03 548 0403 provides one to one counselling to men.
- Manawatu, Abuse & Rape Crisis Support (ARCS) Manawatu 06 356 5868 A/H 0800 883300 for women and men
- Louise Nicholas, National Sexual Violence Survivor Advocate - Mobile 021 326 505

- Ken Clearwater, National Advocate - Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse Trust – Mobile 027 353 3854

The following support options are available to you through Air Force:

- Chain of Command

- Defence Health Centres

- Base Welfare Facilitators/Chaplains/Psychologists

- Anti-Harassment Advisors (AHAs) – look up your local AHAs in the DIXS HR Toolkit or call 0800 693 324

- After hours 0800 NZDF Mental Health Line - 0800 189 910 (external provider)