

# Recruitment and Retention

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## AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS ACTION PLAN RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION DEFENCE AND VETERANS

*The Australian Democrats believe that in order to meet our domestic and international defence obligations the Australian Defence Force must be stable, robust and highly skilled. Like many nations around the world, Australia is struggling to meet its defence force recruitment targets and to retain its most valuable asset – people.*

*The Democrats recognise the important and unique role the Australian Defence Force plays within our society. Employment in the ADF carries with it unique risks not present in any other Australian workplace and we believe that the conditions under which defence personnel work must take into account these unique circumstances.*

*The Democrats have argued that there will be no improvement in recruitment and retention rates until the Government listens to and acts on the legitimate grievances of current and ex-service personnel.*

*To counter declining recruitment rates, the Government has embarked on flashy, targeted advertising campaigns. The Government is relying on slick marketing, not real changes that will make a career in the ADF an attractive option for young Australians.*

*The Australian Democrats believe that to make an ADF career a more attractive option, the Government must start looking after its Defence Force personnel properly.*

*“Dr Nelson said  
'there's no higher  
priority than people'  
but from my  
experience in dealing  
with current and past  
Defence force  
personnel, the people  
priority mantra has  
passed its expiry  
date”*

**Senator Andrew Bartlett  
Spokesperson on  
Defence**

## Our Action Plan

- We will continue to lobby the Government and to support changes to the military justice system in line with the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee's report *The Effectiveness of Australia's Military Justice System*.
- The Democrats maintain that strong and robust mechanisms must exist to support personnel injured or suffering illness in the course of, or as a result of their regular duties or deployment to areas of conflict. The Democrats will work to ensure that personnel injured or those disabled in the course of their normal duties, including training, are treated quickly enabling them to get back into productive work within the ADF or ensure that they are appropriately cared for if they are no longer able to work.



Other ACTION PLANS are available online at  
[www.democrats.org.au](http://www.democrats.org.au)

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- We will work to eliminate all forms of bullying including sexual harassment and the deliberate targeting of injured or ill personnel.
- The Democrats will continue to pursue the expeditious handling of cases brought to the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Scheme.

## The Issues

### Military Justice

After several Parliamentary and Government commissioned inquiries held over many years, Australia's military justice system has been revealed to be unable to respond quickly and appropriately to serious incidents or to treat the people it was meant to protect fairly and in line with the principles of natural justice.

The Australian Democrats have supported the Government's recent moves to overhaul Australia's military justice system, but have argued that this overhaul is not moving quickly enough or to such an extent that will ensure acceptable standards of justice are met.

### The human cost

The Australian Defence Force holds a unique place in Australian society. The men and women who enlist as regular service personnel or reservists do so with the knowledge that they may be called on to serve their country on the front. The jobs they undertake on behalf of the nation carry with them an inherently high risk of physical and psychological harm.

The Government has not done enough to ensure that personnel are adequately cared for in the event of injury or disablement as a result of their service whether this is war-like service, non-warlike service or training. There are glaring anomalies in the way service personnel are treated with the inability of people to access appropriate treatment in a timely fashion or being given little support from their employer – the Government – to transition from service to high needs civilian living.

The Government must fully support its service personnel if it is serious about improving its recruitment and retention rates.