

# 10 NEWS

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## Defence abuse victim speaks out

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PHOTO: Male and female crew members of the Australian Navy stand onboard a Navy ship, all unidentifiable, good generic. ([www.navy.gov](http://www.navy.gov))

A former sailor from HMAS Albatross in Nowra who says she was gang raped two decades ago, is urging other victims to put forward their submission to a national inquiry looking into abuse in the defence forces.

Loretta Somerville, who now lives on the Central Coast, says she was raped one evening in 1990 away from the base by a naval seaman and three of his civilian friends.

Ms Somerville says although she reported the incident to police.

No charges were laid and she wasn't given counselling or support.

She says her submission to the defence abuse taskforce is one of several attempts she's made to get her case acknowledged and provide her with closure.

"NSW police were very understanding, but the department of defence, NAVY especially, were very unforgiving," she said.

"I was treated as if the assault was my fault and I should build a bridge and get over it and I was put straight back on to duties and never offered leave.

"In the end my mental health snapped and I had a break down," she said.

Friday May 31st is the cut-off date for victims of abuse to lodge their submissions to the taskforce.

The ABC has placed calls with the Department of Defence and HMAS Albatross.

**Topics:** [sexual-offences](#), [assault](#), [navy](#), [nowra-2541](#), [hmas-albatross-2540](#)

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