

Australian defence force hit by new sex scandal

The Australian military was rocked on Thursday by a new sex scandal, including allegations of assault, child porn, rape and drug-dealing within its ranks.



The Australian military has been rocked by a new sex scandal Photo: Getty Images

9:39AM GMT 12 Jan 2012

Documents obtained by Channel Seven News under the Freedom of Information Act detail what it called "ongoing, often major, breaches of discipline in [Australia's](#) armed forces".

It said more than 100 incidents had been reported in the last year, from weapons mishaps to sexual assault, especially in the Navy where allegations of misconduct on four warships are being investigated.

Among them, alleged sexual assaults on HMAS Newcastle and HMAS Diamantina have been referred to police.

The documents, referred to as the "Hot Issues Brief", detail a female sailor aboard HMAS Success claiming she had been indecently assaulted during a port visit to Singapore by a male shipmate.

Seven months later, a senior officer on the same vessel was reported to police for videotaping sexual encounters he had with junior sailors.

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On HMAS Toowoomba, a female sailor complained of indecent assault, bullying, and harassment, including a so-called "Beer Bounty" being placed on her: free beer for the first sailor to have sex with her.

Other incidents include a female civilian who was reportedly assaulted at the Royal Military College at Duntroon and two teenagers who were found living with a soldier at Sydney's Holsworthy army base for two weeks.

Seven News said the documents also contained "a handful of child porn charges, drug dealing, and rape allegations", without going into details.

The revelations add to the unwanted reputation the military has gained with the Australian Defence Force stung in recent years by a string of allegations, some decades old, of abusive and sexist behaviour in its ranks.

Claims against the defence force came to a head last year with a report into incidents on board the supply ship HMAS Success in 2009 finding a sexually predatory and boozy culture, concealed through silence and fear.

This was followed by a high-profile case of an 18-year-old female cadet who went to the media saying she had sex with a fellow defence academy classmate who allegedly broadcast the encounter on Skype so his friends could watch.

That incident sparked several inquiries, including one into the treatment of women in the armed forces that in November reported "widespread low-level sexual harassment" at Australia's premier military college.

In a statement, the Australian Defence Force said it has "no tolerance for misconduct or security breaches".

"An organisation is measured in how it responds to such allegations," it said in reaction to the Channel Seven report.

"Defence has responded promptly to these incidents, including referring criminal matters to relevant civil authorities."

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