

May 12 2017 - 6:00AM

Wollongong lawyer fights for Royal Australian Navy diver abuse victims

Cydonee Mardon



A Wollongong lawyer is representing elite servicemen abused while serving in the Australian Defence Force who are facing termination or censures for speaking out.

Diana Foye says the poor treatment continues despite the widely publicised investigation 12 months ago into thousands of cases of sexual and physical abuse within the Australian Defence Force.

Ms Foye is instructed by clearance divers with the Royal Australian Navy in a class action across Australia in regard to further victimisation they suffered once they reported sexual and physical abuse to their superiors.

“My clients' careers have been adversely affected, with many having received termination notices and black marks against their names after they reported the systematic abuse and a culture of bastardisation that they were subjected to by senior officers,” Ms Foye told the Mercury.

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Diana Foye

"The majority, if not all, of the senior officers that carried out, coerced and supported the abuse have been able to maintain their careers and in fact, have received further promotions. My clients, who were junior defence members at the time and subjected to such abuse, have had their careers roadblocked."

Ms Foye, a military compensation lawyer, said that after reporting the abuse, her clients have been “further victimised, bullied, harassed, humiliated and ostracised throughout their employment” resulting in severe psychological injury, significant damage to their reputation, “and future career as elite members of the Australian Defence Force”.



Fight: Wollongong lawyer and human rights advocate Diana Foye is representing victims in a class action against the Australian Defence Force. Picture: Alex Sturman

“They had no option but to pursue avenues externally of the very institution that is supposed to protect them, she said. “Some of those men have fought to protect our country in the front line in

Afghanistan and are now left being hung out to dry and discarded when they have mental health issues that are far from stabilised.

“They have been used as scapegoats to other serving members as to what happens when abuse is reported.

“This has had a detrimental effect on my clients' health and that of their families for which they seek recognition, accountability and compensation.”

Fairfax Regional Media

Illawarra Mercury

Source: <http://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/4653495/royal-australian-navy-diver-abuse-victims-speak-out/>