

# Australian Army sex assault scandal grows as reservist charged in new incident

*Paula Doneman and Alison Sandy Monday, 17 June 2019 7:54 pm*



## Army sexual assault scandal

(Source: 7NEWS Sydney)

A number of service personnel are facing serious charges over a series of incidents.

**EXCLUSIVE:** An army reservist has been charged with the sexual assault of a female Australian Defence Force member in the Brisbane army barracks.

It comes just four months after another soldier was charged with the rape of a 16-year-old girl at the same base.

7NEWS can reveal an army reservist will face court charged with one count each of sexual assault and burglary over the alleged incident at the Enoggera Barracks last month.

The man allegedly had been drinking with colleagues on and off the base before climbing through a window of a dormitory where the woman was asleep. She allegedly woke to find the man sexually assaulting her. 7NEWS was told colleagues ran to her aid after hearing her cries for help.

The man cannot be identified under Queensland laws. Detectives issued the man a court summonses on the two charges and he was released on watch house bail. He will appear in the Brisbane Magistrates Court this Wednesday.

In a statement to 7NEWS on Monday night, the ADF said it was aware an Australian Army soldier was charged following an incident against an ADF member at Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera, and was assisting Queensland Police with their inquiries.

"Due to the Privacy Act, no personal details of current or former serving members will be provided without their written consent, however Defence can confirm the accused member has been suspended from duty," the statement said.

The ADF said as the matter was an ongoing investigation it was not appropriate to comment further.

## **Earlier incident**

In February, 7NEWS revealed a soldier was charged with raping a 16-year-old girl he allegedly smuggled in his car boot on to the base.

The soldier who cannot be identified for legal reasons met the girl through Snapchat after she posted she need a place to stay.

The soldier has been stood down without pay pending trial.

## **Avoiding scrutiny**

A 7NEWS Freedom of Information application into its members being charged with criminal offences found the Australian Defence Force did not centrally record the primary reason why the members were discharged and whether they were charged with crimes at the time of their exit.

That includes those that were in the military when the offences occurred. "...there is no facility in the defence PMKeyS (sic) database against the primary reasons for discharge from the ADF) to record, or easily access specific information about sexual offences," according to the ADF documents on protocols surrounding the handling of sex offences.

The FOI also revealed an inconsistency between all three armed forces which "may use different terminology", leading to difficulties in the collation and comparison of recording statistics related to termination of service.

The ADF's internal investigation body ADFIS also did not maintain figures of personnel dismissed from their respective armed force for "offences, sexual or otherwise".

The ADF said in a statement on Monday night that its cultural change initiatives are focused in encouraging victims of abuse and sexual misconduct to report and seek Defence support services.

"The Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office (SeMPRO) provides confidential services, advice and support to: all current and former Defence personnel (including their families); and Defence Force Cadets, who have been impacted by sexual misconduct," the statement said.

"Additionally the Joint Military Police Unit operates with a victim-centric approach regarding the wishes of victims of abuse and sexual misconduct. This policy is followed on all reported cases.

"Defence provides support services and options for victims to make their complaint, ensuring they are provided an environment where they feel safe to do so."

The ADF statement also said alleged and proven offences, including those investigated by civilian police are recorded on a live military policing database. The Defence Human Resource databases, called PMKeyS, is not used for that purpose.

## **Overseas incidents**

Nine people in the Australian Air Force were dismissed from service for sexual misconduct between 2016 and 2017.

Of those, seven were charged by civilian police, according to the documents obtained under FOI. The documents also revealed seven Royal Australian Navy sailors (RAN) were arrested by Singaporean authorities during port visits between 2017 and 2018.

The alleged offences for ranged from a sailor urinating and exposing himself on a nightclub dance floor, another sailor inappropriately touching a woman at a bar, and other incidents involving theft and assaulting police.

The ADF was able to negotiate with the Singaporean authorities to release six of the seven Navy personnel who returned home.

The seventh RAN member was charged and tried, but later able to return to Australia.

The documents show these incidents involved only .02 per cent of the 2971 RAN personnel involved with port visits to Singapore.

Once they returned the ADF dismissed three sailors for separate incidents of obscene conduct (the nightclub incident); breaking and entering into a shopping centre and assaulting police; and disorderly conduct while drunk, blocking a hotel entrance and arguing with police.

Two of the RAN members received formal warnings – one for squirting water at a taxi driver during an argument over food spilled in a taxi and the other for stealing a bottle of alcohol from a bar.

Another RAN member received a letter of reflection for the alleged inappropriate touching of a woman at a bar as there was no prospect of conviction. A seventh member received formal counselling for arguing with the taxi driver over the spilled food incident.

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Source: <https://7news.com.au/news/crime/australian-army-sex-assault-scandal-grows-as-reservist-charged-in-new-incident-c-170495>