

Kiwis to probe rape of sailor



EXCLUSIVE

CYDONEE MARDON

THE Royal New Zealand Navy has vowed to investigate claims an Australian sailor was drugged and violently raped while on exchange with one of its ships.

The woman, who can only be identified as Jennifer, reported the rape to a superior officer the day after it happened at Sembawang port in Singapore in 2007, only to be warned she would be sent home to Australia and known forever as “the girl who got raped”.

Years later, when she found the courage to report the sexual assault, she was notified by the Commonwealth Ombudsman that the case was “outside its jurisdiction”.

After telling her story as part of the Sunday Telegraph’s Uniform Justice Campaign, the woman was contacted by the Australia chief of Navy asking if she “wanted any further action taken with respect to the terrible incident that occurred in Singapore in 2007”.

Meantime a New Zealand Defence spokesman told the Saturday Telegraph it was



Our story last week.

making further inquiries on this matter.

“We invite the person to come forward to the NZDF Military Police and make a formal report, if she wishes to,” a spokesman said.

“The NZDF takes all allegations of offending, especially sexual offending, seriously. The allegations reported in the Daily Telegraph are deeply concerning and describe behaviour that is wholly unacceptable in the Royal New Zealand Navy and the New Zealand Defence Force.”

The spokesman said any investigation of members of the NZ Armed Forces for serious offending overseas is

conducted in the same way as if the allegation has been made in New Zealand.

“A victim of sexual offending is able to make a report to their command chain, directly to the NZDF Military Police, or to the NZDF Sexual Assault Prevention Response Advisers,” the spokesman said.

Former Army officer turned lawyer, Glenn Kolomeitz, from GAP Veteran and Legal Services, welcomed the response – albeit delayed – from authorities. “We welcome the New Zealand Navy taking this seriously and are grateful that the Chief of the Australian Navy has reached out to our client,” he said.

“The questions remain, however, as to why it took so long and why nothing was done back when the assault occurred and was reported.

“This case again shows how Defence’s sexual assault prevention and reporting systems are failing our serving and former ADF women. Caesar can no longer be allowed to judge Caesar in the military sexual trauma area.”

Australian Defence was contacted for comment but had not replied by late yesterday.

CAMPAIGN AIMS



- The abolishment of internal ADF reporting, investigation, and rulings on all assault complaints.
- All reporting and investigation of military sexual assault should be undertaken by Federal Police.
- Each base should have a sexual assault liaison officer from the Federal Police on base.
- Federal police should have a hotline for members of the ADF to call domestically

- and internationally.
- Investigation to be led by Federal Police without interference from ADF internal mechanisms.
- All sexual assaults should go through the Australian justice system.
- If the case does not meet the criminal standard threshold, all cases should automatically be considered under a Military Abuse Tribunal.

The NZDF takes all allegations of sexual offending seriously

New Zealand Navy

The former Australian Navy sailor who was told by Australian Defence her sexual assault in New Zealand was outside its jurisdiction.

Apology

We're sorry.

You might have noticed that we made a mistake in the Woolworths Catalogue on sale Wednesday 25th of May. We advertised the image for the Duck Marine Deep Action Gel Toilet Cleaner 750ml on Page 26 which is not available at Woolworths.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused.



Survivors ignored for too long

CYDONEE MARDON

A PROMINENT executive of a veteran-centric law firm is calling on the new government to assist military sexual trauma survivors and the people supporting them.

Executive Director of GAP Veteran and Legal Services, Bronwyn Dawson, said it was “bad enough” that outgoing Defence Minister, Peter Dutton, ignored calls for reform but for Defence public servants to ignore us is “inexcusable”.

“It is essential that each and every person we work with feels supported and not alone. Sadly, challenges we have faced in supporting our many survivors include the



Bronwyn Dawson.

likes of the Defence Legal Division undertaking to pay its serving members’ legal fees yet we are still chasing Defence Legal for invoices to be paid 12 months later,” Ms Dawson said.

“Our directors, lawyers, human rights advisers, case managers and welfare support staff are all veterans or veteran family members.

“We continue to assist and support our survivors of military sexual trauma and defence abuse even in the face of obstacles put up by

Defence Legal and the broader Defence bureaucracy.”

Ms Dawson said parliamentarians of all political persuasions needed to support the work being done to support survivors.

“We need the political will to make changes in the defence personnel space.”

Ms Dawson said interactions with the incoming government, including Senator Penny Wong and Shayne Neumann, had been extremely positive and “we certainly hope to see positive change for those who have served our country and for those of us who continue to acknowledge their commitment and sacrifice by supporting them”.