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Department of Defence
PO Box 7900
CANBERRA BC ACT 2610

CDF/OUT/2014/ 223

Ms J. Lambie

By email: jacquilambie@gmail.com

Dear Ms Lambie,

I refer to your media release of 28 February 2014 titled, 'DART submission cut-off date should be abolished'. Your statement implies that you have information which indicates that 'sexual abuse in the ADF is an intractable problem'.

There is no doubt that there have been ADF members who have suffered from past abuse and mismanagement. I am pleased that the establishment of the DART and its procedures have been able to go some way to address the hurt and past wrongs that have occurred.

Defence has implemented robust processes and procedures for addressing complaints of abuse from ADF members. Additional oversight is also provided through the statutory appointment of the Inspector-General ADF, the Defence Force Ombudsman and the Australian Human Rights Commission. We are also undertaking a significant cultural reform program which has been reported publicly. We continue to work closely with the Sexual Discrimination Commissioner and her second annual report on Defence will soon be released. Therefore if you have specific evidence of continuing sexual abuse in the ADF I urge you to make that available to me so that appropriate action can be considered.

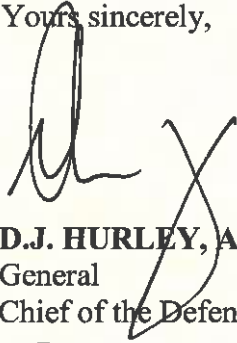
I have previously stated publicly that, 'Together with the ADF's senior leadership, I will work to provide a fair, just and inclusive work environment. I repeat my previous personal undertaking to endeavour strenuously to defend the right of all members of the ADF to serve in an environment free from abusive behaviour of any kind.'

I note that you state quite emotively in your media release that 'a culture of cover-up at a very high level ... has stopped abuse victims from speaking out and receiving a fair hearing, as well as justice' and further that, 'the influence of ... senior ranks in our ADF who chose in the past to turn a blind eye ... should not be allowed to dishonour and undermine confidence in our ADF.' In light of my commitment to address cultural change in the ADF, I am particularly alarmed by these comments.

I am disappointed that you did not think it appropriate to raise your concerns directly with me in the first instance, and provide to me any evidence supporting your allegations, before issuing your media release. Your yet to be substantiated statements reflect poorly on the vast majority of ADF members, including senior leaders, when it is clear that there is a significant focus on cultural change in the ADF.

I encourage you in future to provide me an opportunity to address any matters of concern you may have rather than becoming aware of them through a media release. Such an approach will go a long way to building a productive relationship between you and the ADF when you assume your position in the Senate.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D.J. Hurley', written over the typed name and title.

D.J. HURLEY, AC, DSC
General
Chief of the Defence Force

7 March 2014