

**Speech by Defence Minister the Hon.
Marise Payne to ANU:
Women and National Security
Conference,
Canberra, 4 April 2017**

Thank you Margaret and good morning ladies and gentlemen.

Let me begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respect to their elders past and present.

We have very many distinguished guests here today, indeed the conference has a stellar line-up of distinguished panellists and speakers, excluding myself of course. I also would like to particularly acknowledge Professor Margaret Harding, the Acting Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), ANU, and Professor Rory Medcalf, the Head of College, National Security College.

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests one and all, to members of the ADF who are here, and very many other guests arrayed in front of me.

I am very pleased to be at ANU's National Security College today and thank both Margaret and Rory for their introductions and for their very warm welcome and for the opportunity to speak. The college is indeed one of our premier defence and strategic institutions and I am sure this week's Women and National Security Conference will cement that reputation already strongly held.

I must apologise in advance. One of the by-products of this job is that you tend to speak and run. Usually it's to go back to Parliament but on this occasion it's to attend a Cabinet meeting this morning and there are no excuse for lateness in that context.

Yesterday I was in North Queensland and dealing with some of the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Debbie, which will be familiar to many of you. Only in Australia would a tropical cyclone be called Debbie.

But in the context of this conference, I had the very great pleasure of meeting Lieutenant Colonel Jenny Harris, who is leading a particularly impressive team of men and women in their support work in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Debbie. It made me think, in terms of today's conference,

that no matter where I go, no matter what I do, in this job, I meet the most extraordinary women working in national security and I am extraordinarily grateful for the honour and the opportunity of this role, enabling me to do that and I am extraordinarily proud of those women particularly with whom I work in the ADF.

I wanted to begin with a very broad overview of Australia's current operations and security environment.

Some of you will know that President Ghani, Ashraf Ghani, of Afghanistan, is in Australia today. That is of course, one of the missions to which we are currently contributing—270 troops in a NATO-led Train, Advise and Assist mission.

But across the world we have over 2,000 personnel deployed on over thirty operations, from Afghanistan to Egypt to Sudan and as I said, as we speak, we have more than 1,600 ADF personnel engaged in clean-ups in Queensland, following Cyclone Debbie.

Our highest rate of operational tempo though continues to be focused across the Middle East region.

When I meet President Ghani this afternoon, I look forward to discussing further with him Australia's role in Afghanistan, as a follow-up to a trip I made to Kabul last year.

Additionally, in Iraq and Syria Australia continues to make one of the largest contributions to the counter Daesh campaign.

Daesh has now lost more than 60 per cent of the territory it once held in Iraq and more than a third of the territory it once controlled in Syria.

However, the Iraqi Security Forces continue to meet with fierce resistance from Daesh fighters, who are determined to fight to the end in their last stronghold in Iraq.

As the fighting and the complexity of the fight escalates in Mosul, we are cognisant of the threats also posed by the links between Daesh in Syria and Iraq and South-East Asia.

This government is working closely with our partners in the region to address this threat, including across Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Ladies and gentlemen, a secure and stable Indo-Pacific underpins our economic security.

In this region we have threats that we face from a number of [indistinct]. Our stability is threatened by North Korea's continuing reckless and destabilising behaviour.

The ongoing pursuit of its nuclear and ballistic missile programs is a clear breach of UN Security Council resolutions and further threatens regional peace and stability.

We have consistently called upon North Korea to cease its provocative behaviour, to abandon its nuclear and missile programs and to engage constructively with the international community.

We do believe that with calls such as our own, China also has a central role to play in contributing to the peace and stability of North Asia and the Indo-Pacific, including with North Korea.

It is important for regional stability that we all play our part. We—Australia—are committed to working with our international partners and allies to ensure a stable region and a rules based global order.

With this in mind, it is important that we are able to work effectively with partners and ensure we have operational effectiveness.

To today's topic though, if I may: 'Women, Peace and Security' and in this case, I wanted to speak for a few moments about the National Action Plan.

For the Australian Defence Force, addressing equality is about improving both our capability and our operational effectiveness.

The landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted in 2000, acknowledged that men and women experience conflict differently.

It addressed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, humanitarian response and peace building and urged all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all peace and security efforts.

Since that resolution of 2000, seven additional UN Security Council resolutions have been adopted providing an international framework that underpins the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Women, Peace and Security is a community, a state and a global issue. Its implementation is a whole-of-government priority, and a whole of society undertaking.

Australia is a strong and consistent advocate for the UN's Women, Peace and Security agenda. In September of last year, I moderated the session on

Women, Peace and Security at the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Meeting in London.

I spoke there about the importance of increasing the number of women leading and serving in peace and security operations and supporting inclusive peace processes.

We know that armed conflicts, and disasters for that matter, contain elements that are inherently gendered.

They affect men and women, boys and girls, in different ways.

Differences include the vulnerability to violence and deprivation, and this vulnerability impacts different sectors of the community in different ways. There are gendered differences in risks and threats; and in capabilities, coping strategies and opportunities.

So, effective crisis responses will reflect a sound understanding of these differences in policy, plans, training and operations.

The Women, Peace and Security agenda encourages action against four pillars, widely known as the four Ps:

1. Participation of women at all levels of decision-making, in peace operations and peace processes;
2. Protection of women, including from sexual and gender based violence;
3. Prevention of violence against women through the promotion of rights, accountability and law enforcement; and
4. 'Perspective': incorporating a gender perspective into policy, planning and operations.

On International Women's Day in 2012, Australia adopted a six-year National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

The plan demonstrates Australia's commitment to implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda. It provides a clear whole-of-government framework and a joined-up approach to strategies and actions.

Defence itself has seventeen areas of responsibility under the plan. Our actions inform everything that we do—from our international engagements, to exercises, to developing the operational capabilities of the ADF.

Delivering Operational Effectiveness

As I said a moment ago, the Women, Peace and Security agenda is not just about equality. It is about improving our capability and operational effectiveness.

Recent operational experience in Afghanistan, in disaster response operations and on exercises demonstrates the importance of integrating gender perspectives as part of military operations. Through the test-bed of exercises such as the very large Talisman Sabre we have shown that female military personnel may be in a better position than men to engage with local women to identify potential threats, to conduct searches, to identify community needs.

Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Angus Campbell, recently commented that in Afghanistan female soldiers were deployed deliberately to balance the all-male infantry companies. There was much more engagement with women in the villages. He observed that there would be no engagement or the most cursory engagement otherwise.

In 2015, the ADF appointed a Senior Gender Adviser to the new Security Force Assistance mission in Afghanistan.

The role was established to ensure the safe and meaningful participation of Afghan women within the Afghan National Defence Security Forces, placing women at the frontline of addressing Afghanistan's security challenges.

Colonel Amanda Fielding was the first of four ADF female officers to take on this role.

During her tenure, Colonel Fielding established the inaugural Afghan Women in Security Advisory Committee; a strategic, politically engaged committee that is ensuring the longevity of current efforts for women's integration and empowerment within the security architecture.

Colonel Fielding is currently responsible for integrating Women, Peace and Security into ADF operational planning and I know that she'll be speaking here on the subject of 'A practitioner's perspective from the field'.

This is a subject in which she is eminently well qualified.

In November last year, Major Betina Stelzer was deployed as the first military gender adviser to the UN mission in South Sudan.

Major Stelzer is assisting local women to reduce the high levels of sexual and gender-based violence by training local forces on the effect of violence and inequality on the peace and stability of the country.

The UN global study on the implementation of Resolution 1325 highlighted that “the principles of gender equality in humanitarian assistance are not limited to conflict-affected settings but equally relevant to natural disasters”.

In February last year, Tropical Cyclone Winston hit Fiji. It devastated many parts of the country, resulting in forty-four deaths and affected some 350,000 people.

Australia was quick to participate in the assistance to Fiji in the immediate aftermath and the ADF deployment for Operation FIJI ASSIST.

This was the first ADF operation to fully incorporate a ‘gender perspective’ into operational planning and conduct.

Operation FIJI ASSIST included two gender advisers in its personnel. Lieutenant Commander Jacquie Swinton embarked on HMAS *Canberra* and provided advice to the Commander of the Joint Task Force to implement a gender perspective in all operational activities.

At the same time, Major Jo Richards was on the ground in Suva representing Defence at the UN Protection and Gender Based Violence meetings.

Major Richards identified and engaged local women’s networks to coordinate and establish appropriate relief activities. Major Richards was part of the team that delivered 200 dignity packs, sourced from the UN Population Fund, to the women of Taveuni Island; one of the worst affected islands.

Based on the valuable and critical contribution these gender advisers made during FIJI ASSIST, the Chief of Joint Operations, Rear Admiral David Johnston, within the Department of Defence has directed that at least one gender adviser *must* be deployed on all future humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.

To support that directive, Defence is developing Australia’s first Gender Advisor Training Course that will be piloted this year.

In the context of the opportunity to speak here today, ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to be able to announce the establishment of the *Minister for Defence Visiting Fellowship in Women, Peace and Security*. The fellowship will be established at the University of New South Wales in the Australian Defence Force Academy. The Rector at ADFA has agreed to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the collaboration between the university and Defence by creating this fellowship, and I thank him very much for this honour.

I have consulted with the Secretary of the Department of Defence, and the Chief of the Defence Force, and together with the Rector we will advertise

the application and selection processes in due course. The fellowship will be open to Defence civilian and military candidates, regardless of gender.

The purpose of the visiting fellowship is to transfer practical and research knowledge of Women Peace and Security experiences between Defence and the Academy.

This is a pragmatic whole of enterprise approach. I intend for this fellowship to fast-track the incorporation of Defence's learning from various deployments into the Academy's civil and military education and training programs; and to transfer the latest research findings of the university's Faculty back into Defence for refinements into deployable capability. The objective is to make the whole of Defence approach to Women, Peace and Security a 'business as usual' capability enhancer.

Let's be clear: a 'Women, Peace and Security' perspective built into our operations **is** a capability enhancer.

This is more than another important milestone; it is tangible progress.

Building on these experiences, in mid-2017, Australia will launch its first comprehensive study into the contributions of Australian uniformed and civilian female personnel in peace and security operations.

This study is being undertaken by the University of Queensland, in partnership with the Australian Civil-Military Centre. Drawing on the operational experiences of 350 women and men from the ADF, Australian Federal Police, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Defence Public Service from 1988 to 2014, the study will provide insights into how women contribute to the effectiveness of these operations and how we can better support their participation in future missions. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of that study as well.

Building Regional Capacity

Ladies and gentlemen, Australia has taken a lead role globally in implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda. We have had the opportunity to share the lessons we have learned and solutions we have adopted with our regional partners, as well as being able to learn from their experiences.

In February of last year, the Prime Minister and I launched the Defence White Paper—setting out a comprehensive, long-term plan for the security of the Australian people.

For the first time, we have prioritised and funded international engagement as a core Defence function.

As Defence increases its investment in international engagement over the coming years, prioritising the Women, Peace and Security agenda presents a real opportunity to deepen cooperation and build stronger relationships with our international partners. We are doing this now through the Defence Cooperation Program.

In December last year, Australia hosted a delegation of Indonesian TNI military officers, seven out of eight of them women, for a seminar and workshop on women, peace and security. These Australian and Indonesian soldiers worked side-by-side, sharing their experiences and their unique perspectives about military deployments.

The outcomes of this seminar have contributed to planning for the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus Expert Working Group on Peacekeeping.

As co-chair of this Expert Working Group, with Indonesia, Australia will use its leadership to ensure that Women, Peace and Security is firmly on the agenda for ADMM+.

We are also working with PNG through our long-running Defence Cooperation Program to increase female participation.

Some initiatives include:

- Embedding an ADF Lieutenant Colonel into the PNG Defence Force personnel branch to help develop policies to recruit and retain women; and
- Upgrading the Landing Craft Heavy vessel *Lakekam* to include an accommodation module enabling increased participation of women on maritime patrols.

And in 2017, we now have the first female PNG Defence Force member at the Royal Military College, here in Canberra.

We must also be careful that we do not artificially create barriers to women's participation.

Let me give you an example:

The Turnbull Government is very proud of our shipbuilding program and an important element of that program is the replacement patrol boats for twelve of our Pacific Island neighbours.

The Guardian-class patrol boats are part of the Pacific Maritime Security Program, building both capacity and capability across the Pacific.

During consultations with our Pacific Island neighbour countries on the design of the new patrol boats, though, we learnt it was difficult for some countries to send women to sea because of the undifferentiated accommodation and ablutions layout.

This layout makes it unnecessarily difficult to integrate women into the navies and police maritime wings of some national cultures.

By identifying this in the planning phase, Defence included the requirement for separate accommodation for men and women in the design of these Guardian-class Patrol Boats.

This relatively simple redesign removed a barrier to women's participation and will help Pacific Islands nations harness the capability of the full workforce available to them.

I am pleased that we have national security policymakers and practitioners from Palau, from Tuvalu, from Solomon Islands, from Kiribati, from Fiji, from Tonga, from PNG and from Timor-Leste with us here today. I welcome the opportunity for all participants to share experiences and discuss how we can work with you to strengthen the participation of women in all aspects of your national security capabilities.

Defence: Gender Equality and Cultural Change

I'll turn briefly to the culture that defines us. While the Women, Peace and Security agenda focuses on Australia's contribution to overseas missions, gender equality at home is of equal importance.

Fifty-one percent of our nation's human capital is women.

If we are not fully able to access that 51 per cent of the population, we are not recruiting the best people for the Australian Defence Force or the Australian Public Service.

In March 2012, Defence set out a unified statement of cultural intent and supporting strategy in *Pathway to Change*.

It was clear at the time, from multiple studies and reviews and experiences, that Defence did not consistently meet the high standards expected of it and we needed a clear framework to accelerate cultural change.

Pathway to Change acknowledged that noticeable gaps remained in the representation of women across senior leadership positions, and this was not supportive of the generation and sustainment of a representative and inclusive organisation.

Pathway to Change acknowledged that gender inequality is an issue that can impede organisational capability and resilience by not maximising the potential of female ADF members and public servants, and the potential of half of the Australian labour force.

I strongly believe that Defence's continued capability and success relies in large part on addressing these issues, including cultivating a diverse workforce with an inclusive culture. Diversity brings tangible benefits to organisations, such as attracting the best talent from the entire recruiting pool, increasing our human capital, increasing resilience, more accurately reflecting the community we defend, and bringing a diversity of thought to decision-making and practice.

I am very proud to say, as I did at the beginning of my remarks, that women in Defence are making extraordinary contributions across the range of military planning, policy, and operations in support of our national interest.

The number of women at the Australian Defence Force Academy and overall in the ADF has increased.

Australian servicewomen now comprise 16.1 per cent of the permanent full-time ADF.

At the moment, 266 women are serving overseas on ADF operations, representing about 14 per cent of the total deployed force.

We have 82 women in senior officer positions—colonel equivalent and above—compared to 48 in February 2012.

Progress has been made but there is more to do.

As of 1 January 2016, Defence began direct recruitment into all combat employment categories.

With the removal of all gender restrictions from combat roles, women can pursue their career in the ADF based solely on considerations of their preference, intellect, and their physical capacity.

That's not just another milestone; it's a foundational reform.

For the benefit of our nation—to ensure that we have an ADF that is broadly representative of our society—it is crucial that we attract, retain and nurture our talent; all of the talent available to us.

The result is that we are growing the future force with the broader perspectives and leadership skills that both men and women bring to our national challenges.

Our Defence civilians are also an important repository of new and experienced women.

Women make over 41 per cent of Defence public servants, and more than 40 per cent of the Defence Graduate Program is now female.

At the senior leadership level we are also seeing real progress, and I acknowledge the efforts of the senior leadership of Defence—the Secretary, the CDF, in large part, in relation to these achievements.

In the most recent recruitment rounds for the Senior Executive Service, 43 per cent of appointments were women, compared to around 30 per cent in the existing senior executive cohort.

All of these women are making outstanding contributions to our country and are outstanding role models for other women.

We are also in the process of increasing the number of women on internal senior committees and, in alignment with Coalition Government's stated policy, as members of Australian Government boards.

So the culture is changing. The challenge is to make our success sustainable, so that we can continue to build on the foundations that we have laid and continue to see female participation increase in our ADF, in the APS, and in senior leadership positions.

Conclusion

On 8 March, on International Women's Day this year, the Prime Minister and I spent the morning at the Australian Defence Force Academy to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of women in the Australian Defence Force and at the Academy.

As the Prime Minister said during his speech that morning, the opportunities that have opened up for women in the ADF across the recent years are extraordinary.

Those young men and women, currently at ADFA, will one day lead our ADF. From the outset of their careers they will have a different perspective of women's roles in national security from the generations that have preceded them.

That is why it is essential that we are consistent and persistent advocates for gender equality and change, both at home and abroad.

Gender equality is a precondition for advancing development and reducing poverty, which in turn will underpin regional stability and prosperity.

There is an appetite for engagement on gender initiatives and many countries we work with are doing excellent work in this area.

By building capacity and understanding gender considerations in each country with which we partner, we are better prepared to respond during a crisis, disaster or operation.

But we can't expect to succeed or achieve our best, as a nation, without greater participation of women—at all levels and in all roles.

It's been very interesting, preparing my remarks for today's presentation. In fact I've had the opportunity to reflect on twenty years of broad involvement in the parliamentary aspects of the national security debate and policy development, and to reflect on the changed world in that time. Rory Medcalf in his opening remarks referred to the purpose of this conference in enhancing the role and work of women in national security. It's an excellent aim for the conference. The women I work with across the world—female Defence ministers in a number of nations—the women I work with in the ADF—we will all work to lead the way, with organisations such as the College and to make sure that the outcomes are as positive as they can be.

Thank you very much.

The speech can be viewed on ANU TV—
www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVstlRUtgVM