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Hegemonic Masculinity in the Australian Defence Force –
the Exclusion of Women from Combat
Service as State Policy, 1973-2013

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Social Sciences

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
University of Sydney

2015
Author’s declaration

This thesis is my own work and does not incorporate, without acknowledgement, any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. It does not contain any material previously published or written by another person where due reference is not made in the text.

Jyonah Jericho

27 August 2015
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Thank you, Peerasak for allowing this thesis to dominate my timetable over the years and for never questioning this prioritisation. I dedicate this thesis to you.

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Professor Michael Humphrey and Dr Fiona Gill are the supervisors of this thesis. Their assistance has enabled me to improve the clarity of my research questions.

Of course, I take full ownership of the content of this thesis and all arguments and errors are my own.
Abstract

This thesis uses qualitative content analysis methods and aims to identify the dominant cultural and political themes elites seek to arouse when they defend Australia’s Gendered Combat Policy in the public domain. Male Defence personnel and Federal Government Ministers lead these discussions. No prior study explores how or why male elites and other men who benefit from hegemonic masculinity in state institutions actively defend the bio-political regime the Executive enforces over the gendered combat body. In recent decades, debates have shifted from away from criteria of gender to criteria of biology as public support for gender equality grows. Elites argue that the biophysical performance limitations of the female combat body justify the state enforcing this regime.

Excluding women from combat duties is not just another case of discrimination against women that occurs in Australia’s work sector. The social problems that transpire from this policy extend beyond women’s diminished citizenship status. Excluding women from frontline military roles replicates the patriarchal makeup of key institutions of state power, locally and globally. The military is a formidable entity that defends Australia’s sovereignty and protects key institutions that uphold the state as a patriarchal construct. Excluding women from frontline military duties denies them the opportunity to accrue the experience required to lead Australia’s military institution locally and on the world stage. The absence of women in these senior roles is a dominant factor that upholds hegemonic masculinity within Australia’s civil–military relations and the realm of global warfare and international security.

The exclusion of women from combat roles for over a century explains why Australia’s martial narratives and war images do not celebrate a feminised warrior archetype. This absence is a factor that replicates the way women are naturalised in passive roles that are subordinate to men in their nation’s collective consciousness.
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<td>Australian Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<td>ADF</td>
<td>Australian Defence Force</td>
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<td>ADFA</td>
<td>Australian Defence Force Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANZAC</td>
<td>Australian and New Zealand Army Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANZUKUS</td>
<td>Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cth</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFAT</td>
<td>Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australian Government)</td>
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<td>DI</td>
<td>Defence Instruction (Australian Defence Force)</td>
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<td>DI-(G) PERS 32-1</td>
<td>DI-(G) PERS 32-1: Defence Instruction General: Employment of Women in the Australian Defence Force</td>
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<td>ES</td>
<td>Executive Summary (The Burton Report)</td>
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<td>GCP</td>
<td>Gendered Combat Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of the Australian Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>No pagination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF</td>
<td>Royal Australian Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAN</td>
<td>Royal Australian Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RODC Report</td>
<td>Regular Officer Development Committee Report (Australian Army)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RODC Part A Report</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSL</td>
<td>Returned and Services League</td>
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<td>SAS</td>
<td>Special Air Service Regiment (ADF)</td>
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<td>Term</td>
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Chapter One  Introduction: a battle for gender equality

1.1 Research questions

This thesis is about the persistence of gender-based policies that discriminate against women in Australia’s armed forces. My discussion centres on the mandatory exclusion of women from combat service as state policy. This injustice persists despite the existence of legislation that outlaws most forms of gender discrimination in the public sphere in Australia’s jurisdictions. Australia’s state parliaments enacted anti-discrimination legislation during the 1970s and 1980s and the Commonwealth enacted legislations that outlaw most forms of sex discrimination in the public sphere in 1984 (Thornton 1990: 54–62). The mandatory exclusion of women from combat service in Australia’s armed forces defies the long-term momentum towards gender equality that has transpired in this nation’s civilian society. The enactment of these laws in Australia’s jurisdictions more than three decades ago is evidence that the state supports the realisation of gender equality throughout Australia’s jurisdictions, within public institutions and the commercial trade of goods and services (Australian Law Reform Commission 1994: NP).

This thesis examines the reasons put forward on the public record to justify the persistence of Australia’s Gendered Combat Policy (GCP). Pursuant to Section 43 (1) (a) of the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) the Australian Defence Force (ADF) may lawfully refuse to hire women in ‘Direct Combat’ (hereafter ‘combat’) military roles if it
chooses to do so. Clause 3 (1) of the *Sex Discrimination Regulations 1984 (Cth)* defines the term ‘Direct Combat’ as those military:

> duties requiring a person to commit, or to participate directly in the commission of, an act of violence against an adversary in time of war (Attorney General’s Department 1984b: Annexe p. 3).

Australia’s colonial states united to create a federated nation in 1901. The Executive has perpetually imposed restrictions on women’s right to participate in combat-oriented military roles since Australia established a national military force in 1901 (ADF 1999: NP; Grey 2008: 274–275). The state partially reversed Australia’s GCP effective 1 January 2013. From 1 January 2013, women currently employed by the ADF may apply to transfer into any combat role if they can meet the normal entry criteria Australia’s armed forces impose on men who apply to enter combat service. The entry standards include minimum physical fitness capacities and minimum educational qualifications (Snowdon 2012). As at August 2014, eight defence employment categories remain classified as ‘Direct Combat’. Women from Australia’s civilian population may not apply to work as combat personnel in Artillery, Infantry, Armour and Combat Engineer roles in the Australian Army. They also may not serve as Naval Clearance Divers in the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and they are restricted from working as Ground Defence Officers and Air Defence Guards in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). These women may also not work as Combat Officers in the ADF’s elite intra-service Special Operations Group, formally known as the Special Air Service Regiment (SAS) (ADF 1994; Snowdon 2012).
My research questions explore the dominant themes to which supporters of Australia’s GCP appeal when they defend this regime in the public domain. I define the term ‘defend this regime’ to include arguments put forward by individuals and institutions that seek to offer a historical account of the reasons that explain why the state enforces a GCP and these discussions are not implicitly or explicitly critical of this policy.

I argue that these historical accounts implicitly support the state enforcing a GCP as they provide a rationale that justifies the reasons why the Executive has denied women the opportunity to serve their nation’s military institution as combat personnel. In recent decades, Western nations such as Canada and Israel have appointed women into military roles that engage the enemy as part of their primary or secondary duties (e.g. Yopp et al. 2012). These developments causes scholars and defence analysts to question whether the desire to support gender stereotypes and fixed gender roles are a sole or partial factor that explain why some public figures continue to support Australia’s GCP in defiance of global trends (e.g. Bridges 2005: 165).

My research questions examine broader aspects that transpire from the existence of Australia’s GCP and the ways individuals and institutions defend this regime in the public domain. I examine the reasons why Australia’s military institution remains a space of exception when it comes to matters of public policy on gender equality. I focus on the themes put forward by military professionals and politicians, because these individuals dominate the formulation of Defence policy and they control the character of Australia’s civil–military relations. By focusing on public statements made by these individuals, my research questions reveal aspects of the way state power is a gendered construct, which favours men and disadvantages women.
My research embarks on a descriptive qualitative content analysis study. I inspect textual records and cultural images such as media caricatures to pursue my research questions. The political dynamics of Australia’s civil–military relations remain at the forefront of this sociological policy analysis study. I limit my analysis to evidence that exists on the public record and is intended for public consumption. I aim to understand how and why prominent public figures, elites and institutions influence Australia’s civil–military relations by supporting the state’s enforcement of a GCP and I theorise the reasons why they do this from a gendered relations perspective.

The persistence of the ADF’s GCP is a social problem as it explicitly discriminates against women in favour of men in Australia’s public sphere, as evident from the language contained in Section 43 of the Sex Discrimination Act. Section 43 (1) (a) of this Act provides the ADF with a partial exemption to this Act and states it is lawful for the ADF to:

*Discriminate against a woman* [my emphasis] on the ground of her sex in connection with employment, engagement or appointment in the Defence Force (a) in a position involving the performance of combat duties (Attorney General’s Department 1984a: NP).

This employment-related exemption defies the spirit of the *Sex Discrimination Act*. The objective of this Act aims to outlaw most forms of negative sex discrimination in Australia’s public sphere, with the exception of those exemptions contained in this legislation (Bridges 2005: 26–27; Maddison and Partridge 2007: 51). For example, Division IV of this Act makes it lawful for charities, sporting bodies and religious institutions to favour one sex over another for the purposes of hiring staff and admitting
members into their institution if this behaviour is genuinely consistent with the ethos, values and objectives these bodies pursue (Attorney General’s Department 1984a: Division IV; Thornton 1990: 132–142).

Australia’s GCP is a topical issue because it defies trends toward gender equality that have occurred in many of Australia’s public institutions since the Sex Discrimination Act was enacted by the Australian Parliament in 1984. The organised Women’s Movement generally regards the enactment of the Sex Discrimination Act as a victory for their cause because it outlaws most forms of discrimination targeted towards women and men. However, they regard the inclusion of Section 43 in this Act to undermine this victory, as this clause makes it lawful for the ADF to discriminate against women in favour of men (Summers 2008: 9). Critics of Australia’s GCP label the ADF as Australia’s so-called “last bastion”, that is, the lone remaining public institution that upholds a culture of absolute male privilege in Australia (e.g. Davison 2007: 60).

A nationwide survey conducted by private research firm Frank Small & Associates in 1995 states that 47% of Australians support the enforcement of the GCP in the Australian Army. This survey also reports 42% of respondents thought the Australian Army should annul its GCP. Furthermore, 11% of those surveyed were undecided, and stated that they held no opinion towards the status of the Australian Army’s GCP. These figures illustrate how the ADF’s GCP divides society, as they suggest around half of all Australians believed women should be able to work as combat personnel during the mid-1990s (Smith 1995: 541). It is likely that public opinion has shifted further in favour of reversing Australia’s GCP since 1995 because women have integrated into the ADF en
masse in recent decades. Between 1996 and 2005, the state authorised the ADF to appoint women into armed roles previously closed to women, such as Weapon System Operators in the RAAF (ADF 1999: NP; Scott 2000).

1.2 Sociological problems

The social problems I explore in this thesis extend beyond the issue of the state denying Australian women the opportunity to work in eight occupational categories in their nation’s military institution. The persistence of the ADF’s GCP encompasses three broader overlapping sociological problems. The enforcement and replication of this policy diminishes Australian women’s civic rights and citizenship status (e.g. Carter 1996). This policy simultaneously subordinates the status of women to men in Australia’s cultural images and historical narratives (Pettman 1996: 16–17). The persistence of this policy also replicates the patriarchal character of the state and its core institutional power structures.

Overarching social problem

The problems I listed above collectively uphold hegemonic masculinity in some of Australia’s most prominent and influential private and public institutions, especially the armed forces. The elite masculine hierarchies of power that prevail in Australia are defined by social norms and practices that underpin hegemonic masculinity in the global arena (e.g. Connell 1996: 209; 1998: 4; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 831–833); a hierarchy of elite masculinities and subordinated masculinities (e.g. homosexual
masculinities) and subordinated femininities characterise power relations in both domains.

This connection between domestic and global patriarchal institutional power structures is not coincidental. The armed forces exert significant cultural and political influence in Australia, and most other nations. Male political and military elites control Australia’s military apparatus and the formulation of Australia’s Defence policy (Smith 2000). This gendered structure in Australia is consistent with the way male elites control the armed forces of all other nations (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 834–835, 840). The armed forces play a leading role in the realm of international relations as the military apparatus may defend or overthrow their national government and other national governments by the use of force (Thornton 1990: 140; Elshtain 1998).

Throughout history, women have been virtually absent from the councils and forums that governs international security, such as the United Nation’s Security Council. Over the past century, male Defence personnel with combat status have dominated the leadership and composition of peacekeeping forces and the domain of international warfare (Stiehm 1982; De Groot 2001). During the new millennium, female peacekeepers have accounted for less than 2% of personnel deployed to UN-sponsored peacekeeping missions (Bridges and Horsfall 2009: 120). Australia’s armed forces engage in multilateral warfare and military operations other than war alongside imperial western nations such as the United States and Britain. Australia’s engagement in the Korean War and Afghanistan War are examples of this. Cooperation with these powerful nations’ military forces underpins Australia’s long-term Defence strategy. Australia does not possess a
large military compared to regional powers such as China. Australia therefore relies on the guarantee of protection from powerful allies to deter a superior military force from threatening its sovereignty and freedom (Blaxland 2003: 519–560).

Feminist scholars and others who support gender equality argue that Australia’s female military personnel exert little influence in the realm of global warfare and international security (e.g. Thornton 1990: 140; Bridges and Horsfall 2009). Since Australia became a federated nation, its female military personnel have never engaged in war on the frontline in any military role whose primary purpose is to fight the enemy in hand-to-hand combat. Between 1948 and 1989, Australia’s armed forces engaged in 23 offshore peacekeeping missions and other interventionist military operations other than war. Australia did not deploy armed female Defence personnel to any of these campaigns (ADF 1999; Department of Veterans’ Affairs 2006: 90–93). The absence of women from frontline military roles partially explains why women remain marginalised in one of their nation’s most prominent public institutions (Pettman 1996: 16–17) and it also explains why Australian women cannot access an elevated form of citizenship bestowed on the nation’s frontline fighters (e.g. Feld 1978).

**Elite citizenship**

Historically, sovereign states have excluded women and men from marginalised groups, such as ethno-religious minorities, from serving as combat personnel in their nation’s armed forces. Such policies have denied these men and women the opportunity to access the elite citizenship status the nation bestows on its frontline martial fighters. Combat
personnel are the trusted protectors of the nation’s sovereignty as they defend their nation from attack and invasion from a hostile military force. The civilian populace recognise the special role the combat fighter fulfils and this elevates the standing enjoyed by combatants in the nation’s imagination (Feld 1978; Yuval-Davis 1997b: 20). Nations such as Australia that maintains an all-volunteer military force, elevate the citizenship status they bestow on their combat fighters because of the voluntary self-sacrifice participation entails. From a patriot’s perspective, most citizens believe the majority of volunteer combatants join the armed forces so they may proudly defend their nation on the frontline (Carter 1996: 107; De Groot 2001: 29).

Australia’s all-male combat personnel continue to have exclusive access to Australia’s military citizenship and enjoy an elevated status in their nation’s martial images and martial narratives. Australia’s female military personnel are yet to serve as combat personnel in any war zone during the new millennium (e.g. Snowdon 2012; Knight 2013). As at 1 July 2014, the Australian War Memorial reports 43 ADF personnel died on duty in the Afghanistan War (2001 to present) and the Iraq War. The ADF contributed personnel to the Iraq campaign from 2003 to 2009. All of these 43 fatalities were male Defence personnel who engaged as combat personnel in the Australian Army’s Combat Corps or the ADF’s SAS Regiment (Australian War Memorial 2014). The sacrifices made by these men to their nation in these wars received more attention from Australia’s media and the state than other public officials who died in the course of discharging their public duties during the same period. Australia’s Prime Ministers or Defence Ministers personally announced these 43 fatalities in special public addresses made to the nation. Senior ADF executives and senior crossbench Australian parliamentarians attended the military funerals conducted by the ADF to honour the 43
men who died during military service (e.g. ABC 2011; Australian Defence Association 2012).

Australia has deployed ADF personnel to the Afghanistan War since 2001 and a contingent of ADF personnel remain in Afghanistan in 2014. ADF female combat-support personnel have engaged in foot patrols in the Afghanistan Campaign (Australian War Memorial 2014) and these women include medics who bear arms. ADF male and female combat-support personnel are authorised to return fire and may maim or kill the enemy if they engage in live warfare. The ADF does not embed female personnel into Platoon Patrols that engage in the most dangerous missions deep inside enemy territory in Afghanistan. This policy aims to protect the lives of Australia’s female Defence personnel and largely explains why no ADF female combat-support personnel have died in the Afghanistan War (e.g. Dodd 2009) according to Australian War Memorial records dated 1 July 2014 (Australian War Memorial 2014).


Theoretically, in a conventional war setting, the danger from enemy attack diminishes as the distance from the front increases. While this philosophy was true in past wars, it is inappropriate under the modern threats of guerrilla, missile and airborne attacks, where every military unit in a theatre of operations is vulnerable to attack [my emphasis]. As technology improves the “battlefield” expands, hence the threat of involvement in direct fighting increases.
Indiscriminate long-range military weapons such as mortars and artillery can and do kill combat personnel embedded deep in the rear, such as nurses and medical personnel who heal the sick on board medical supply ships (Spurling in Australian Associated Press 2000: NP). This military reality causes scholars and others to question the true reasons why women in Australia’s civilian society still may not access the full privileges of the elite citizenship status bestowed on Defence personnel who work in Direct Combat roles in Australia’s armed forces (e.g. Pettman 1996: 16–17). This observation about the near-defunct ‘front–rear’ binary partially supports the argument posed by feminist scholars and others that the state enforces the GCP partially for unstated reasons, such as the desire to uphold traditional gender roles in the military institution (e.g. Spurling 2003).

Moreover, the GCP persists partially because men dominate state institutions that exert significant power in Australia’s public sphere such as the Civilian Defence Executive, the Federal Parliament and the mainstream media and these men support state policies that favour men (e.g. Pettman 1996: 17; Summers 2000; Spurling 2000).

The mandatory exclusion of women from combat service replicates a legacy that imagines Australian women’s contributions to their national military institution as auxiliary to men’s service. This policy portrays men as natural leaders and action-makers. This subordination of Australia’s female Defence personnel to their male colleagues also mirrors the patriarchal character that defines Australia’s war narratives and war images (Buttsworth 2003: 23–24, 68).
Gender and nation

The persistence of the ADF’s GCP diminishes the status of women in Australia’s national project (Pettman 1996: 16–17). Australia’s cultural images and historical narratives have celebrated the elite citizenship status of its frontline fighters for almost a century. The notion of the all-male citizen soldier became prominent in Australia’s cultural narratives during the First World War. The myth of the all-male Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) Digger is central to the story of the founding of the Australian nation and its unique identity. Australia’s Land Army Infantry soldiers defended Australia’s national interests at the Battle of Gallipoli in 1915 during the First World War, even though they fought as a junior partner in support of an imperial force and an imperial cause. This was the first time Australia’s military forces participated in a major military battle on the global stage since becoming a federation. This historical fact explains why the Digger image enjoys an elevated status in Australia’s national consciousness (Lake 1992; Garton 1998).

Australia’s Land Army Infantry forces enjoy an elevated status in Australia’s national history because this unit dominated the headcount of Australia’s contribution to the First World War. In contrast to the Second World War, Korean War and Vietnam War, Australia’s Air Corps and Naval Corps played no role during the Battle of Gallipoli (Grey 2008: 84–254). Australia’s armed forces did not have an Armour Corps service during the First World War (ADF 1999: NP; Evans 2004: 186–187; Grey 2008: 84–122). These historical facts explain why Australia’s Infantry combat fighters are associated with the creation of Australia’s national consciousness. It also explains why the Infantry fighter enjoys an elevated status in Australia’s martial symbols and war narratives (Lake
1992; Garton 1998). This historical fact is of consequence, because Infantry and Armour are the only two employment categories that the ADF has never expressed support for allowing women to serve (Dunn 1998: 3–4). Critics of Australia’s GCP claim that the reluctance to allow women to serve in Infantry is partially or dominantly attributable to elevated status that the all-male Digger enjoys as the creator and defender of the Australian nation during the First World War. Defenders of the GCP aim to preserve the elevated status Australian men enjoy in their nation’s collective consciousness (e.g. Bridges 2005: 101–103).

**Gender and state**

This thesis’s research problem extends beyond the marginalisation of women in the nation’s cultural images. The ultimate social problem concerns the enduring patriarchal dominance of Australia’s state apparatuses and the subordination of women to men in Australia’s key institutional power structures, including its civil–military relations.

The masculine makeup of the military apparatus is a defining feature that shapes the patriarchal character of the state (Connell 1987: 126; 2001: 118). The state is a power structure with a monopoly on authority to inflict force (Weber 1986 [1922]: 921–926; Connell *et al.* 1989: 37). Subject to legal constraints such as the nation’s Constitution, the state may conduct systemic, large-scale violence against its own citizens and other internal and external enemies of the nation such as terrorists. These aggressive acts perpetrated by the state are legitimate in a democracy if the majority of its citizens support them. These violent interventions also confer sovereignty on the state when another nation’s government accepts that the state has a legitimate need to engage in
measured violence against some of its citizens or enemy forces. Such intervention by the state is usually justifiable if it is essential to uphold justice and order within its borders to protect its human population and to secure the state’s interests, territory and sovereignty. Nation-states also accept that the executive has a legitimate right to use violence to protect its citizens from an attack committed by an external enemy force within its own borders, and possibly offshore if this intervention is essential to defend its human population and national interests (Weber 1968: 921–926; Billig 1993: 40; 1995: 28; Gellner 2006: 3).

The armed forces are the ultimate defender of the nation’s territory and way of life. In Australia, the *Defence Legislation Amendment (Aid to Civilian Authorities) Act 2006 (Cth)* (Attorney General’s Department 2006) authorises this nation’s military institution to deploy its personnel and assets to protect state institutions attack by its own citizens (Head 2006). Australia’s armed forces control the most advanced and destructive armaments owned by the nation. The military is the protector of Australia’s Constitution and Federal Parliament. This institution’s weaponry is more lethal and destructive than the light arms managed by Australia’s police forces (Smith 1998; Head 2006). The unique responsibility and high power of the Armed Forces further explains why this institution enjoys elevated status in the collective consciousness of most nations (Billig 1995: 92).

The mandatory exclusion of women from combat roles replicates the patriarchal power structures that define the culture of Australia’s armed forces. The absence of women from combat service severely limits their ability to gain promotion into the most senior leadership roles throughout this service (Bridges 2005: 30). Australia’s female military
personnel cannot accrue the operational experience required for appointment to the ADF’s Executive Council. Defence personnel with combat service dominate the vast majority of senior executive positions in Australia’s Defence Forces, the Department of Defence and Australia’s Defence Ministry (Quinn 1988: 67; Holden and Tanner 2001: iii–iv). The virtual absence of female personnel from these executive bodies is a dominant explanation for why Australia’s civil–military relations persist as a masculine construct (e.g. Anderson 1997: NP).

Liberal and patriarchal theories are the dominant contemporary approaches that explore the gendered relations of state (Connell 1990: 512–513). Patriarchal theories assume that the state has been a male-dominated institution since its formation (Connell 1987: 128). Empirical observations support this argument. Male personnel continue to dominate the leadership of federal public institutions that manage large-scale violence and enforce compliance with Australia’s laws. These institutions of power notably include the courts, the judiciary, the armed forces, policing institutions and the prison system (Connell et al. 1989: 7, 42). Since Australia became a federated nation, only four female judges have been appointed to the High Court of Australia compared with 44 men (High Court of Australia 2013: NP). During 2013, only 28% of elected members in Australia’s 43rd Parliament were women (Kenny 2013). These types of statistics represent the low participation of women in these national institutions and show how the sexual division of labour and power is a core trait of Australia’s state apparatuses (e.g. Connell et al. 1989: 8–10). Historically, the ADF is the most male-dominated arm of the Executive (e.g. Connell et al. 1989: 7) and remains so. At 30 June 2012, only 13.8% of ADF personnel and 4.9% of its senior executives were female (ADF 2012: 286, 301).
The liberal state is associated with capitalist social formations. Historically, liberal theories of citizenship do not distinguish between the genders of its subjects and focus on the individual’s property rights and other legal rights that its political structures bestow on the person (Connell 1990: 510). Although liberal and patriarchal models present competing accounts of the state, they are not mutually exclusive (Connell 1987: 127–128) as evident from domestic and cross-national studies. Opponents of gendered combat policies claim that patriarchal power structures explain the creation and persistence of this regime. Furthermore, they contend that the failure of liberal states to fulfil the promise of gender equality is a dominant factor that explains why women remain excluded from combat service (e.g. Thornton 1990: 140; Sasson-Levy 2008). For example, gender inequality and patriarchal power structures may persist in a capitalist system that bestows rights on the individual (such as Australia) as the pursuit of gender equality may remain an implicit goal. This inequality may transpire largely because of the way in which male elites replicate patriarchal structures and because of the way that gender inequality is deeply naturalised within a given social formation (Connell 1990: 511; Thornton 1990)

Australia has traditionally been classifiable as a liberal state, largely because its constitution aims to bestow legal rights on the individual. Furthermore, its constitution aims to limit the powers of the Executive, who remain accountable to its citizens who in theory have equality before the law (e.g. Thornton 1990: 13–23). In recent decades, Australia’s state apparatus has become a neo-liberal construct, because economic rationalism exerts a dominant influence over the formulation of government policy beyond trade and finance. This outcome has partially diminished the rights its people enjoy as individuals before the law (Walsh 2011).
The character of Australia’s state apparatuses was dominantly male when the Australian Parliament debated the *Sex Discrimination Bill 1983* (Connell 1987: 14–15; Summers 2000). As argued by Connell (1987: 126) “State elites are the preserve of men, with very few exceptions.” In 1985, women accounted for only 9% of persons employed in the “upper levels of the state”, *i.e.* Australia’s Parliament (Connell 1987: 15). Susan Ryan was the only female member of Cabinet in the Hawke Government when the Australian Parliament enacted the *Sex Discrimination Act* on 21 March 1984 (Parliament of Australia 1984: 388; Larmour 1990: 2; Connell et al. 1989: 42–43).

The senior leadership of Australia’s Executive remains a male-centric institution in the new millennium despite increased representation of women in the Australian Parliament (Summers 2004: 45). During the first term of the Coalition Government led by Prime Minister Tony Abbott, which commenced on 16 September 2013, Julie Bishop was the only female of the 19 members appointed to Cabinet (ABC 2013). The Federal Parliament is Australia’s most powerful political structure and women currently account for 32% of members in the House of Representatives and the Senate (Parliament of Australia 2014). The low representation of women in the Australian Parliament is partial evidence of hegemonic masculinity in the state’s core power structure (Connell 1987: 15) as women’s low participation numbers are one of a few factors that uphold male privilege. The virtual absence of women from the most senior Cabinet portfolios such as Finance, Communications and Defence reinforce male privilege in Australia’s Parliament as men dominate the formulation of Federal Government policy (Woodward 2013: 15).
**Hegemonic masculinities**

Hegemonic masculinity is a dominant form of masculinity that groups, agencies and states may create within a defined context and its character and influence over gender relations may alter over time. Hegemonic masculinity is a specific type of ‘masculine hegemony’. The notion of masculine hegemony is a more encompassing concept that refers to social structures and power structures that maintain male exclusivity in highly visible arenas such as elite international sports. Those who benefit from masculine hegemony often use violence or force to exclude women from participating in arenas of male exclusive privilege (Bryson 1987).

Hegemonic masculinity is distinguishable from masculine hegemony, as it bestows the most honourable status on men who are members of this exclusive form of male privilege. Masculine hegemony and hegemonic masculinity share a close association, as members of each masculinity may collude to subordinate and exclude women and inferior masculinities (e.g. homosexual men) from engaging in various realms of society that enjoy elevated power and status (Connell 2005: 36–37). For example, women may remain excluded from participating in amateur and professional codes such as rugby, because male players and sports administrators in these codes act collectively to uphold league rules that state women may not access their league as players.

Connell’s theory of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ offers an appropriate sociological framework to investigate the gendered character of military service from a power-relations perspective. Connell’s comprehensive body of work considers “feminist analysis of gender power relations” and how these relations “structure the state” (Sasson-
Levy 2002: 358). Where the state represents women’s military contribution as equal to men’s, the nation is less likely to exhibit hegemonic masculinity in the state’s most influential public agencies (Connell 1987: 152–153; 2002: 23–27).

The armed forces are the arch manager of violence and aggression is a masculine construct. The patriarchal state purposefully seeks to replicate the status quo of gender relations that subordinate women and oppressed masculinities to men who are members of elite masculinities. The armed forces are a quintessentially masculine and the combat ranks engage in extreme acts of violence. The armed forces are ultimate guarantor of the state’s power structures as it may use force to defend the masculine character of the state apparatus. If the patriarchal state relinquishes male exclusivity of the agency that is its ultimate guarantor of power, then it is logical that barriers that deny women access to offices of higher power, such as the parliament, are absent or will gradually erode (Sasson-Levy 2002: 358–359).

Masculinity is a socially constructed concept (Connell 2005: 34–35) which exists with reference to the social construction of “femininity” (Connell 2001b: 31). According to sex role theory, society grooms the male gender to behave in ways deemed ‘masculine’ so men may conform to gender norms that prevail in the community and other domains such as the military institution. This socialisation occurs via dominant messages transmitted in society. These communications come from family, the media, discourses, social practices, cultural images and other outlets (Connell 2000: 23; Barrett 2001: 79). Masculinities are fluid as they may change over time (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 835) and there is no one pattern of masculinity that exists universally across time and space. Scholars must therefore use the term “masculinities” in the general sense, and use
the word “masculinity” with reference to specific institutions and collectives, such as the armed forces (Connell 2000: 24).

Masculinities are a disputed and sometimes contradictory concept. Various schools of thought, including realists, essentialists, post-structuralists and others explore this concept. Masculinities are a non-fixed entity and the widespread acceptance of this gendered trait enables scholars to work with what might otherwise be an indefinable concept (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 836, 849, 852). Most theorists from the competing approaches agree the anatomy of the body is a normally defining feature of masculinities, although the female anatomy may exhibit masculine characteristics (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 836–837). The male body is a masculine construct and the female body is a feminine construct. These biological traits do not automatically confer masculinity or femininity on the gendered body and masculinities are socialised (Connell 1987: 83–86). They derive their meaning from gendered cultural norms, roles and representations that prevail in a group, institution, society or civilisation (Connell 2005: 1–44).

The “military and economic decision-making” exists as masculine constructions (Connell 2003: 16). Men dominate the personnel headcount and executive leadership bodies of patriarchal institutions such as the armed forces and financial institutions. These entities exert significant authority and influence locally, regionally and globally. Historically, men have dominated these institutions and this is a principal factor that accounts for the pervasiveness of the patriarchal society and the general subordination of women to men in key domains of power, especially within the military institution. Men
with combat experience control the executive leadership of the armed forces globally. The social construction of combat service as a masculine profession accounts for the negligible participation rates of women in the upper echelons of the armed forces (Connell 1990; 1999).

The global pervasiveness of male protectionism reinforces the construction of the all-male combat fighter. Male protectionism also shapes the ways the nation’s collective consciousness imagines the warrior (Agostino 2003: 109). The warrior is a cultural archetype that symbolises the armed martial fighter who defends the nation from enemy attack on the frontline theatre of warfare (Youngman 2000). Australia’s cultural narratives represent the warrior archetype as an empowered protector who defends the nation’s vulnerable women from violence. Women assume the role of the protected gender and this in turn depicts their bodies as fragile and unable to cope with the gruelling demands imposed on the combat fighter during wartime (Agostino 2003: 108–109).

This portrayal of women’s bodies as weak in Australia’s cultural narratives is consistent with an argument posed by masculinities scholars such as Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 851), who assert that “social embodiment” is often a core characteristic that define hegemonic masculine structures. Pacifism and antimilitarism are feminine social constructions. The state denies its women the opportunity to bear arms as combat fighters. This exclusion provides a dominant explanation of why peacemaking exists as a feminine trait in the collective imagination of Australia’s (e.g. Thornton 1990: 140) and other western nations’ civilian societies and their military populace (Stiehm 1982).
Hegemonic masculinity exists when a particular form becomes idealised culturally in relation to femininity and other subordinated masculinities in a specific context (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 838, 841). Hegemonic masculinity also exists when the nation’s key social, cultural, economic and political structures collectively uphold some form of male dominance over women. These constructions include religious doctrines and practices, content published/broadcasted by the corporate media, the state’s welfare policies and wage structures that discriminate negatively against women (Connell 1987: 184). This dominance may prevail universally or within a defined time and space (Connell 1987: 184; Connell and Messerschmitt 2005: 849).

The notion of “hegemony” comes from Gramsci’s analysis of class relations (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 831). Gramsci (1971) examines how the elite class may replicate their dominance and privileged influence over the state’s power structures. A group may enjoy hegemonic power and status if it enjoys superior, privileged standing within a society (Agostino 1998b: 73; Barrett 2001: 79). Hegemonic structures normally confer cultural power on its members and subordinate/marginalise those excluded from the dominant group. In western societies, one or more distinguishing factors may define which social group/s enjoys hegemonic status. A person’s sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnicity and socio-economic status are examples of group characteristics that may determine inclusion and exclusion from the elite ruling class. Subordinated social groups may challenge entrenched social structures that create an elevated class. Over time, this resistance might dilute or neutralise the ability of the elite ruling class to control the nation’s cultural, political and economic power structures (Connell 2001b: 38–39; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 847–848).
The “social embodiment” of the male form is a defining feature of hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 851). Social embodiment refers to the various ways in which certain men’s bodies and male bodily practices are idealised in relation to women’s bodies and other men’s bodies. In certain settings such as elite sports, youth, athleticism and peak levels of health and fitness are often idealised as superior to women’s bodies and older men’s bodies.

Youthful men who compete in elite contact sports at the national and international level may enjoy an elevated status in the nation’s consciousness. Younger male bodies are normally more athletic than older athletes’ bodies, and the average male body is stronger and faster than the average female body and this is a source of the prestige bestowed on youthful, male elite athletes (e.g. Connell 1998a; McCree 2011). Those who achieve success in physically intensive male-dominated contact sports such as rugby bring prestige to their nation, as their victory is a metaphor for national dominance and excellence (Bruce 2008; Adair et al. 2009). Moreover, an injured male athlete who refuses to retire from the sports field may enjoy a higher level of masculine status, as this act portrays him as strong and heroic. When a wounded sportsman voluntarily leaves the field, the public may question the elite masculine status bestowed on male athletes in his team and his sports code (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 833).

Heterosexuality and risk-taking are dominant features of hegemonic masculinity in western societies (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 833–834, 851). The role played by heterosexuality in elevating multiple masculinities is evident by the cultural normality of male-female marriage. It is also realised via the subordination of the homosexual men’s
masculinity to heterosexual men’s masculinity (Connell 1987: 186). Scholars such as Connell (1987: 36) argue that a society assumes a man is heterosexual unless there is evidence to the contrary. Agostino’s (2003: 109) research, which examines the masculine culture of the RAN, demonstrates how it is common for Australia’s naval personnel to assume their colleagues are heterosexual unless there is evidence to the contrary.

Masculine power structures contain contradictions and there are limits to the influence elite masculinities can exert within a defined time and space. For example, the most visible bearers of elite masculinities do not always exert the most influence within their nation’s masculine hierarchy. For example, wealthy businessmen and male politicians may exert significant influence over decisions that determine the funding levels appropriated to different sports and the amount of media coverage each sport receives. The elevated status that hegemonic masculinity bestows on the nation’s elite sportsmen might be contingent on these male elites supporting the athlete and their sports code, as these political and corporate elites may wield superior political, economic and cultural power (Connell 2001b: 39).

The cultural status bestowed on an elite masculine group might be limited to a local or narrowly defined audience, such those who follow elite sports (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 838). Hegemonic masculinities need not be the most common form of masculinity. Amateur sportsmen who engage in contact sports normally outnumber professional male athletes who play the same sport. Amateur sportsmen may enjoy an elite masculine status within a confined local setting, but not at the national or international level (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 850). Heterosexuality is normally a criterion that determines which men may realise the prestige that male elites enjoy in a
defined setting. Youthful sportsmen who compete at the highest levels rarely benefit from the privileged masculine status bestowed on their team members or their male peers who compete in the same sport if they are not heterosexual (Connell 2001b: 39).

There are limits to the role played by aggression in upholding hegemonic masculinity in the military institution and other domains in the civilian society. For example, a society may reject the prestige of male sporting aggression when the physical damage inflicted on the opponent becomes too bloody or lethal (Connell 2005: 37). Not all Australian men have an affinity for competitive sports and most Australian men do not participate in aggressive contact sports. This is noteworthy, as competitive sports provide a dominant outlet for Australian men to display their aggression and establish their masculinity. Men who do not participate in competitive sports may choose to realise an elevated masculine identity by participating in other elite male-dominated institutions such as the military that value male aggression as a positive attribute (Connell 1987: 84–85, 107; 2005: 37).

Men comprise the “vast majority” of the estimated population of 30 million defence personnel that serve their nation’s military forces, globally (e.g. Connell 2000: 21; 2002: 113). The social and political structures of the armed forces display the hallmark characteristics of hegemonic masculinity as women are barely visible in the martial domain, including domains of power such as global Defence forums and the global military industrial complex. Men also dominate the leadership ranks of the armed forces of all nations including (Connell 2002: 141) including Australia. Male personnel therefore dominate those positions within the military institution that influence the formulation of Defence policy (e.g. Smith 2000; Summers 2000).
Virtually all democratic nations’ civil–military relations are hegemonic masculine entities. This transpires because the executive exercises full democratic control over the armed forces. Men dominate powerful state institutions that influence the formulation of Defence policies such as the national parliament (e.g. Connell 2001a; 2001b: 43) and other institutions such as Australia’s corporate media. Australia’s media may influence Australia’s civil–military relations policies by purposefully portraying images and narratives that stereotype entrenched norms that exist in the ADF culture and highlight the gap between the norms of Australia’s civilian society and military institution (e.g. Spurling 2000; Wadham 2012).

Men dominate the headcount and leadership of Australia’s legal and political institutions such as the national parliament. This is a factor that masculines Australia’s civil–military relations. Low female participation rates in these domains undermine the ability of women to influence the formulation of Defence policy from within civilian institutions (e.g. Smith 2000: 17). Australia has never appointed a female Chief of the ADF, Secretary of Defence or Minister of Defence. Moreover, the Executive has never promoted a female to the position of Chief or Deputy Chief of the Australian Army, the RAAF or the RAN (Summers 2002: 563; Grey 2008; Hammer 2008; ADF 2013). This absence of women is partial evidence that demonstrates how Australia’s civil–military relations have perpetually displayed a hallmark trait of hegemonic masculinity. Women have occupied roles that may exert significant influence over Australia’s civil–military relations in rare cases, such as when Julia Gillard was Australia’s Prime Minister. As head of the Executive, Gillard assumed the de facto role of Commander-in-Chief of
Australia’s armed forces between 2010 and 2013, as this role assumes the Executive command of the nation’s military institution (Australian Government 2014).

The existence of hegemonic masculinity in a defined time and context does not require men to dominate women universally or throughout a particular institution such as the armed forces (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 846). For example, senior ADF executive Air Vice Marshal (RAAF) (retired) Julie Hammer was Chief Administrator of the prestigious Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) during 2002 and 2003 (Clare 2003: 100). Hammer commanded significant authority over the ADF’s future generation of male combat leaders as Principal of this college.

Men do not always use force to replicate hegemonic masculinities as a means to dominate and oppress women (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 832). For example, the Hawke Australian Government inserted Section 43 into the Sex Discrimination Bill and Australia’s Parliament enacted this Bill via a democratic, legislative process (Summers 2000). The Sex Discrimination Bill was one of the most controversial Bills to pass through Australia’s Federal Parliament (Summers 2002: 17). The House of Representatives introduced this Bill into Australia’s Federal Parliament on 2 June 1983. The Upper House and Lower House of Australia’s Parliament debated this Bill for more than eight months before it passed this Act and created Australia’s GCP (Larmour 1990: 2).
1.3 Sociological contribution

The objectives and scope of scholarly works that explore the history of Australia’s GCP contain little overlap with this thesis. Scholarly research that contains the closest similarities with the aims of this thesis includes work by Smith (1990a), Agostino (1997; 1998a; 1998b; 2003), Buttsworth (2002; 2003), Segal et al. (2002) Bridges (2005), Davison (2007) and Knight (2013).

Most studies that examine the history of the ADF’s GCP list and discuss the range of factors that explain why women do not serve in combat roles. In contrast to this thesis, no previous academic study identifies the themes to which supporters of Australia’s GCP appeal when they defend this regime in the public domain. Furthermore, no previous research theorises the reasons why these elites and other individuals or institutions defend the GCP by analysing public records.

Dr Hugh Smith’s verbal account of the history of the ADF’s GCP takes place as a special lecture recorded at the ADFA on 24 May 1990. Smith’s lecture is now out of date (Smith 1990a). Since 1990, several key developments related to this policy have occurred. For example, between 1991 and 1995 the ADF surveyed the attitudes of its male and female personnel to the idea of opening armed fighting roles to women (e.g. Little 1991a; 1991b; Hodson and Salter 1995) and defenders of Australia’s GCP often appeal to this data to justify their position.
Smith’s contribution to the field is his comprehensive analysis of how Australia did not face an imminent security threat to its borders or within its immediate region after the Second World War. This stability provides the dominant account of why the ADF’s GCP persisted between circa 1945 and 1990. During this period, the state did not need to appoint women into support roles or armed fighting roles to defend the nation from a military threat (Smith 1990a), even though Australia’s armed forces did not meet its recruitment and retention targets during the 1980s (Downes 1988; Hamilton 1988). The stubborn persistence of Australia’s GCP during the 1980s supports Smith’s argument that the state integrates women in combat roles or support roles within combat units as a last resort when the threat of a military invasion is likely or imminent (Smith 1990a).

Segal et al. (2002: 776) validate Smith’s argument (1990a) that Australia’s national security situation is the dominant factor that causes the expansion and contraction of women’s military roles in Australia’s armed forces. The state expanded the number of roles open to women during the Second World War to assist Australia’s male combat fighters who fought the Japanese Imperial Military Forces in Australia’s North. Segal et al. (2002: 776) argues that “Social norms [original capitalisation]” in Australia construct ground combat as a “male prerogative” and this factor exerts the strongest influence over the state’s decision to enforce a GCP.

Segal et al.’s data analysis is limited as they publish their work in a 25-page journal article that examines the history of women’s participation in multiple nations’ armed forces. These academics analyse five secondary source documents, such as other journal articles, to provide a brief history of Australia’s GCP. The sole primary source Segal et al. list in their bibliography does not examine the GCP. This primary data source is a
website address maintained by the Department of Defence. This site lists equity and diversity policy documents that contain issues related to women’s service conditions, such as DI-(G) PERS 32-1 (Segal et al. 2002: 794). Segal et al. do not analyse any ADF GCP documents or speeches made by Federal Government leaders, ADF personnel or other public figures. These four co-authors do not examine how and why elites, the media and other prominent social commentators defend this regime in the public domain (Segal et al. 2002).

Buttsworth’s (2003) doctoral thesis employs cultural analysis methods to analyse images and texts from the mainstream media and wartime propaganda to explain how Australia’s media and America’s media represent the gendered combat body during the Twentieth Century. The bulk of the evidence she examines includes tele-cinema, cinematic movies, photographs, news footage and fictional literature published prior to 2000 (Buttsworth 2003: 8–10).

Buttsworth (2003: 299–306) concludes social and cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity provide a dominant account for the enduring image of the all-male warrior in Australia and the US. These nations’ cultural images persistently represent the combat fighter as a male-exclusive form and this largely explains why most Australians and Americans associate the warrior with all-male images such as the American and Australian citizen soldier who fought in Vietnam and the ANZAC Digger (e.g. Buttsworth 2003: 6, 9–10).
Agostino’s sociological research project collects qualitative interview data from male and female RAN personnel during the mid-late 1990s and she publishes her analysis of this data in three journal articles and one book chapter (Agostino 1997; 1998a; 1998b; 2003). Agostino’s research considers the ADF’s GCP as an adjunct objective and it is not a central feature of her analysis (e.g. Agostino 1997: 15–16, 27–28). Her research demonstrates how the RAN’s service-wide culture and power structures were masculine social constructions during the mid to late 1990s. Agostino (2003) demonstrates how Australia’s male naval personnel actively conspire to replicate the culture of male privilege and prestige and that this behaviour upholds hegemonic masculinity in the RANs social structures. For example, many male naval personnel of non-officer rank routinely harass female personnel as a way to assert their dominance over their female colleagues. During the 1990s, male personnel continued to engage in nude parties in mixed sex communal areas and purposefully used derogatory language in the presence of female sailors (Agostino 1997: 21–24).

Bridges’s trans-disciplinary doctoral thesis is the most recent in-depth scholarly account of the ADF’s GCP. Her thesis provides a comprehensive review of the employment status of women serving in the ADF at the turn of the new millennium. Bridges’s analysis of Australia’s GCP is limited to one chapter and her discussion centres on qualitative interview data she obtained from 30 female ADF personnel during 2003. Bridges’s data captures the attitudes female ADF personnel express towards the ADF’s GCP. She reports that “complex and varied views” appear in this data. Bridges (2005: 232) reports “most” female ADF personnel she interviewed did not wish to serve in a “primary combat role” should they have the opportunity to do this. She concludes that a popular perception prevails among female ADF personnel that male combat personnel
would fiercely reject the integration of women into combat roles as they regard combat
service to be a domain of male privilege and exclusivity. Moreover, they believe that this
negative attitude among male combat personnel is a major barrier that will undermine
women’s ability to succeed in frontline fighting units. In a similar vein to Davison’s
(2007) journal article, Bridges’s provides a literature review to create a taxonomy of the
contemporary social, cultural, political and biomechanical reasons that may justify the
enforcement of this regime in Australia’s military institution and other western nations’
amined forces.

Bridges’s doctoral thesis provides an important contribution to the field as her data
analysis shows how a culture of male privilege continues to remain deeply embedded
throughout the ADF’s organisational culture. She concludes that a raft of Government
policy and legislation upholds male privilege in this institution. The diminished status of
women in the ADF continues to impede women’s career progression in support roles and
independently supports the core argument put forward by scholars such as Burton (1996:
147–158) who argues that a perception prevails among ADF rank-and-file personnel and
its leadership that the female gendered body cannot reach the biophysical standards
required of the competent fighter.

A journal article authored by SAS Combat Officer Lieutenant Colonel Charles Knight
(2013: 58–78) is the most recent scholarship that examines the history of the ADF’s
GCP. This paper focuses on the argument that women’s ‘sexual presence’ in the ADF’s
combat ranks will distract male combat personnel and undermine cohesion of this
institution’s combat units, and thereby reduce military effectiveness. To some degree, Knight’s research replicates the conclusion drawn by Agostino (1997) who collected her data during the mid 1990s from Australia’s naval personnel. His contribution to the field is his recognition that these arguments about women’s sexual presence remain current among senior male ADF personnel and not just male naval personnel.

Knight’s bibliography lists one primary data source among his 86 references and this is a speech delivered by Australia’s incumbent Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, Warren Snowdon in 2012 (Snowdon 2012). This document is a press announcement issued by the Australian Government that informs the public it has authorised the ADF to transfer currently serving female personnel into Direct Combat roles from 1 January 2013. The vast majority of Knight’s secondary materials are scholarly articles. His contribution to the field is a critical literature review that focuses on the ways women’s presence in a combat unit will likely erode group cohesion and diminish the fighting capacity of those nations who reverse their GCP.

### 1.4 Demarcation of thesis scope

My research does not provide a complete, focused account of the gendered history of the ADF’s Air, Naval and Land Army Military Corps. As argued by Lieutenant Colonel (Australian Army) John Blaxland in his doctoral thesis, to consider every unique historical aspect of the ADF’s tri-service commands causes the length of a doctoral dissertation to expand “to an unmanageable size” (Blaxland 2003: 2). There are
limitations to examining Australia’s armed forces as a single entity for a gendered research study. For example, the RAN and RAAF integrated women into occupations previously designated as combat-support roles at different times during the 1990s (Spurling 1999; ADF 1999: NP). I examine the unique histories of the ADF’s Air, Naval and Land Army corps individually when this is necessary to identify and analyse changes to Australia’s GCP that affect only the RAAN, the RAAF or the Australian Army. I examine developments related to specific Direct Combat occupations (e.g. Artillery) when essential to illustrate dominant themes that recur in the evidence and this pattern is relevant to my research questions.

This thesis analyses historical events that occurred in Australia’s armed forces since Australia created a national Defence Force in 1901 (ADF 1999: NP). Australia’s Land Army, Air Corps and Naval Corps adopted the united tri-service united name “Australian Defence Force” in 1976. Prior to 1976, Australia’s armed forces were known by other official names including ‘Australian Imperial Force’ and Australia’s ‘Commonwealth Military Forces’ (Grey 2008: 89–207). To simplify discussion, this thesis refers to generic nouns such as ‘Australia’s armed forces’ and ‘Australia’s Armed Services’ when referring to this nation’s collective military institutions prior to 1976.

Policy analysis focuses on evidence dated from the 1970s until circa 2014. Most public material that justifies the enforcement of Australia’s GCP originates from this period. For example, The Thomas Report provides a cross-national comparison of the history of women’s employment in the Australian, Canadian, British and American Armed Forces during the post-Second World War period. This Report concludes women’s military
roles are expanding “considerably” and uniformly in these four nations’ Armed Forces during the 1970s (Thomas 1978: Abstract). Thomas (1978: 1) limits her explanation for this development to unspecified “sweeping changes in [Defence] policy that have occurred” after 1960 in these four nations’ civilian societies and military institutions.

1.5 Exposition of chapters

This thesis contains seven additional chapters. Chapters Two to Four are introductory chapters. Chapters Five to Seven are data analysis chapters. Chapter Eight is the Conclusions chapter. Chapter Two examines other conceptual debates that support this thesis’s analytical framework. I aim to offer a critical review military sociology and civil–military relations theory. I also examine literature that explores imperial history and the gendered interdisciplinary literature in order to contribute further knowledge to these fields. I use theory from these fields and sub-fields to pursue my research question that examines the themes to which defenders of Australia’s GCP aim to appeal. Chapter Three outlines this thesis’s methods and methodologies. Chapter Four provides a historical background of the social and political context that predates the creation and dismantling of Australia’s GCP. This discussion explores new facts beyond those that I examine in this chapter.

Chapter Five examines how defenders of the GCP seek to preserve traditional gendered roles that prevail in Australia’s civilian society and military institution. I review the evidence through a gender and nation conceptual framework (e.g. Yuval-Davis 1992). I aim to theorise how and why women remain subordinate to men in Australia’s national
project. Discussion shows how defenders of the ADF’s GCP appeal to the need to preserve the status quo of Australia’s nationalist images and narratives, especially its military myths and stories of national origin. Chapter Six seeks to examine the biopolitical regime the state upholds over the martial body and human populations. I use Foucault’s theory of “bio-power” (Foucault 1978: 143) as the dominant analytical framework. I endeavour to contribute to new knowledge that builds on Foucauldian theory by demonstrating how this literature offers a way to understand the ways defenders of Australia’s GCP imagine the female gendered combat body as unable to perform combat service. Supporters of Australia’s GCP appeal to the state to preserve this bio-political regime as it advantages men and disadvantages women. By doing so, they aim to preserve patriarchal structures that imagine the female body as unable in institutions that wield vast power beyond the military institution. In Chapter Six, I aim to demonstrate how supporters of Australia’s GCP seek to defend hegemonic masculinity in the combat corps and service-wide culture in Australia’s armed forces. The influence of this patriarchal structure is of global significance. Replicating hegemonic masculinity in the domain of warfare elevates the power and status of men in international arenas that wield high power. The preservation of global hegemonic masculinity in the domain of international relations and global warfare is the ultimate patriarchal structure to which many defenders of Australia’s GCP appeal when they publicly support this policy.

1.6 Conclusion

The political history of Australia’s GCP is a narrative about gender and power, especially state power. Australia’s armed forces are a unique national institution and
patriarchy and male privilege perpetually define this organisation’s culture. Militarism and warfare display the hallmark characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, and this male exclusive construct has proven resilient to the many advances achieved by the Women’s Movement over the past century. The stubborn persistence of Australia’s GCP is curious as it defies the dismantling of the gendered ceilings of high power that have occurred, to at least some degree, in all of Australia’s major institutions, including Australia’s Federal Parliament and the Office of Governor-General of Australia, who officially is the Commander-and-Chief of Australia’s armed forces.

Discussion in the next chapter builds on the unique story of Australia’s GCP. I aim to show how the gender theory and the military sociology literature offer suitable scholarly frameworks to conceptualise the ways in which female protectionism arguments justify the state enforcing a GCP.
Chapter Two Protection, patriarchy, power

2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces four fields of study that this thesis draws upon to analyse data and conceptualise policy debates. This literature aids me to conceptualise debates that argue that women should not perform combat services because this function is incompatible with fixed gender roles that define Australia’s social fabric. Furthermore, this corpus of scholarly works enables me to analyse public statements made by male elites and institutional policy documents that defend the GCP by appealing to biological gender differences. I draw on these works to theorise the reasons why a shift occurs in public debates that initially centre on gendered binaries and gradually focus on the performances of gendered bodies.

I contribute to these literatures by theorising the various ways that female protectionism arguments serve as an organising principle to justify the persistence of Australia’s civil–military gender gap, and in particular, the need to preserve Australia’s GCP. Traditionally, the state defends Australia’s civil–military gender gap by promoting policies that replicate pre-existing social structures that imagine the nation’s men as protectors of its vulnerable women. The way the state justifies enforcing the GCP reveals the ways in which martial culture and organisation is anchored in the state’s construction of power and protection of the nation’s women. The state expresses these ideas about gender via national identity, martial culture and myths of national origin.
The first conceptual approach I am to develop is military sociology. I also seek to add to knowledge by offering a critical analysis of how the ‘war and gender’ approach and the ‘women in the military’ literature aid an understanding of the restrictions imposed on women’s military service in Australia. These literatures are sub-fields within the interdisciplinary gender studies discipline. The fourth approach I aim to progress is the corpus of literature that explores imperial history and power relations between nations. This subject area examines how social structures that exist in former colonial nations are traceable to the home country who established their land as a settler outpost.

2.2 Military sociology

Military sociology examines the organisational dynamics and social structures of the armed forces. This sub-field also examines civil–military relations and the sociology of war and armed conflict (Caforio 2003: 7–25). Stouffer et al. (1949) investigated the treatment of African Americans in the United States Armed Forces during the late 1940s. This was the first scholarly work to offer a sophisticated sociological analysis of the military’s social structures and the social changes that occur in this institution. Stouffer et al. (1949) identify the relatively favourable citizenship status afforded to African-Americans in the United States Armed Forces compared to their diminished citizenship status in America’s civilian society.

*The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* is a classic text that examines the civil–military relations model where the executive exerts democratic control over the
armed forces (Janowitz 1960). Janowitz (1960: 283–302) advocates that the democratically elected Executive should exert exclusive control over the armed forces and the formulation of Defence policy. This model of civil–military relations is appropriate, as the armed forces constitutionally are a branch of the executive in democratic nations. He advocates the imperative of preserving the professionalism and operational effectiveness of the armed forces, so it may succeed in its unique role as defender of the nation. The peculiar function of the military as a defender of life on a massive scale, explains why it has a strong institutionalised culture whose logic is often distinguishable from its civilian society. Preserving this exceptional culture is necessary to maximise the operational fighting capacity of this unique national institution that serves to protect the nation’s sovereign territory and human population from external attack.

Janowitz (1960: 3–17) argues that defence personnel are skilled professionals who belong to a unique, formidable profession. These Defence personnel share a professional burden with their colleagues to foster the goals of their military organisation to the best of their ability. Janowitz (1960: 79–172) concludes that military personnel also possess other skills beyond those required for warfare. These attributes enhance the professionalism of military personnel and this partially aligns them with their nation’s civilian workforce. For this reason, he regards the armed forces as a social system whose structures may evolve as changes take place in the civilian society.

Janowitz (1960: vii–ix) argues the armed forces should respond to social changes that occur in the nation’s civilian society, except where these values genuinely undermine
military effectiveness. This model is favoured as it provides a more harmonious model of civil–military relations. In reality, the armed forces operates as a microcosm of the nation’s broader society, as military personnel are recruited from the civilian populace and maintain family lives outside of the military (Hodge 1997). This convergence between the military’s internal culture and civilian culture is further evident from the trend toward the civilianisation of many military support roles that has transpired in Australia (Graco 1979) and the United States (Moskos 1986) since the 1970s (Smith 1989).

*The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* offers an implicit gendered idea about military organisation, separation, professionalism and efficiency of the military. This work does not theorise gender relations within the military or the factors that cause the expansion and contraction of women’s military roles during peacetime or wartime (Janowitz 1960; 1971: Epilogue). *The Professional Soldier* takes for granted that gender exclusiveness exists in the armed forces and that the military’s unique status as ultimate defender of the nation’s territory explains its exceptional gender dynamics (Feaver 1996: 232; Carreiras 2006: 76–81).

*The Professional Soldier* offers an appropriate sociological framework to comprehend why the state sometimes allows discrimination based group characteristics, such as gender, to occur in the armed forces (Nuciari 2003: 283). This work creates a theory to explain why visible gap may exist between the culture of the armed forces and the norms of civilian society (Janowitz 1960: 79–103). Defence scholars label differences between Defence culture and the norms of the civilian society the “civil–military gap” (*e.g.* Morgan 2001: 101). Historically a hierarchy of elite and subordinated social groups
defined the internal culture of the US Armed Forces. For example, in the past the US Armed Forces has favoured hiring white men as military leaders – this being a form of negative discrimination based on race, class and gender. The origins of these inequalities are traceable to the roots of America’s civilian society (Janowitz 1960: 82–85, 89). The armed forces are slower to resist changes towards equality that transpire in the nation’s civilian society as they may argue for the imperative need to preserve the military’s operational effectiveness (Hillen 1999).

Differences between the status of minorities in a nation’s civilian society and its military institution are the defining feature of the civil–military gap. Hillen (1999: 160–162) makes explicit the ways that underlying gender homogeneity exists in the armed forces. He notes how a civil–military gender gap may exist based on group differentials such as sexual orientation (e.g. homosexuality) and gender. The integration of women and minorities into the armed forces may undermine the efficient functioning of this institution if their peers do not accept their presence. Empirical evidence shows that male Defence personnel have consistently attacked certain minority social groups and women who serve in the armed forces. This abuse invariably undermines the morale and productivity in the military institution, as it distracts Defence personnel from performing their professional tasks. Defence leaders justify the exclusion of women and minorities from military service by arguing that this policy maximises the operational effectiveness of the armed forces (Hillen 1999). Civil–military Gap Theory allows me to explore the reasons why Australia’s civilian society accepts this normative view that it is legitimate to preserve the GCP if the enforcement of this regime maximise the ADF’s fighting capacity (e.g. Smith 1995: 541).
2.3 Imperial history and power relations

Imperial roots

Contemporary analysis of the gendered character of the state must carefully consider how world history shapes modern state systems. The visible gendered division of labour and power is a defining characteristic of colonial empires. This division is most noticeable in state institutions that manage violence, such as the armed forces. The military heritages of former colonial powers continue to influence the military culture of their former colonies (Connell 2001a: 120–123). For example, Australia’s highest military rank, the Governor-General, is the representative of Britain’s Queen Elizabeth II. According to Chapter One of Australia’s Constitution, the British Sovereign has the constitutional authority to appoint a person to the Office of the Governor-General of Australia and they may terminate this appointment without notice or reason (Attorney General’s Department 1900: Chapter One).

Australia’s military history is rooted in its loyalty to the British Imperial Empire. The ANZAC soldiers who died at Gallipoli sacrificed their lives to defend the interests of the British Empire (Tranter and Donoghue 2007: 166). The perpetual subordination of Australia’s armed forces to the formidable British Armed Forces is evident from how Australia’s military institution has engaged as a junior partner in all imperial wars it has fought in over the past century alongside Britain. In recent years, this includes the Iraq War and the Afghanistan War (Blaxland 2003: 492–518). Australia’s armed forces have also been subordinate to other nations’ military institutions, such as the US, which has
been the dominant imperial power during the post-Second World War period. These imperial partners influence Australia’s military culture and Defence policy to some degree because Australia is reliant on these two nations’ supreme military power to guarantee its long-term security (McLean 2006).

A corpus of social sciences literature examines how imperial colonial powers such as Britain may influence the contemporary societies of former colonial states, such as Australia (McClintock 1992). The colonial state forged the foundations of Australia’s civil–military gender gap. The British Armed Forces that settled Australia in 1788 did not contain any female personnel (Grey 2008: 7–27). Britain did not appoint women into any armed military roles during Australia’s colonial history and their service within Australia’s colonial forces was restricted to nursing duties (Grey 2008: 3–65). Women also did not serve in armed roles in the national armed forces of virtually all nations at this point in history and the sexual division of labour in Australia’s colonial forces was on par with international norms (van Creveld 2000: 433; Goldstein 2014: NP).

A handful of scholarly works provide an account of the gendered history of Australia’s armed forces that centres on Australia’s imperial history (Curthoys 1996: 1). The most detailed and authoritative is “Damned Whores and God’s Police” authored by Anne Summers (2002: 38–41, 425–470). The first edition of this book is dated 1975 and a Revised Edition was published in 2002. Summers (2002: 59–74) argues that sexism is the dominant ruling ideology that oppresses Australia’s women. Australia inherited this gendered social structure from the European settlers who arrived in Australia during the late 1780s. Most of these settlers were British. Australia’s colonial administration was accountable to the British Sovereign and Britain was a patriarchal society. Summers
(1975: 9) argues that sexist social structures exist in contemporary Australian society and a “vast array of cultural assumptions, prejudices, myths, fears and other ideologies” about gender roles serve to subordinate women to men in Australia’s patriarchal society during its colonial and postcolonial history. With respect to Australia’s military history, she concludes Australia’s “men have always endeavoured to restrict the field of women’s [military] employment” except in times of warfare. However, once warfare ceases, men seek to revert the military to an all-male bastion of male privilege and prerogative by relegating the nation’s women back into “‘her sphere of influence’ – the [family] home” (Summers 2002: 425).

Scholarly works that centre on Australia’s imperial history offers further insight into why Australia continues to uphold its civil–military gender gap during its post-federation history. This field explores the social divisions and discrimination that existed in Australia’s colonial settler population and how they inherited this legacy from British society. Australia’s colonial European settlers inherited its power relations from Britain’s patriarchal society. In a similar manner to their British ancestors, women in Australia’s colonial society were naturalised as mothers and homemakers and they did not bear arms in the military during Australia’s colonial period (Aveling 1992).

**Social divisions**

Discrimination based on gender and other group differences, notably class, was widespread in Australia’s colonial history and women were absent from the most senior public offices in Australia’s colonial states (*e.g.* Aveling 1992; Curthoys 1996; Madley 2004). None of the colonial administrations that occupied mainland Australia or
Tasmania appointed any women to the office of Governor or any other post within the Military Executive between 1788 and 1901 (Grey 2008: 7–65). This historical fact provides a dominant account of the foundations of the masculine identity in the state and military apparatuses of Australia’s colonial territories.

Discrimination based on race, class and gender was rife during the first century of Australia’s colonial history (Griffiths 2009). Most settlers who arrived in Australia during the 18th Century were Anglo-European convicts from Britain’s lowest socio-economic classes. These convicts enjoyed few rights and privileges in colonial Australia, unless the Governor of their colony awarded them emancipist status. The state and elite ruling class exploited convicts and free settlers from the lowest classes and paid them substandard wages for their labour (Gillen 1989; Aveling 1992). For example, single female emigrants from the lower classes who migrated to colonial Australia between 1850 and 1900 were not paid award wages on par with women from higher-ranking classes. The ruling class restricted these emigrant women to working in “isolated domestic situations” (Woollacott 2003: 213–214).

The colonial states rarely punished Australia’s free colonial settlers for maiming or killing Australia’s Indigenous population in unprovoked attacks. This injustice created a hierarchy in colonial Australia whereby Australia’s Indigenous population were widely regarded as inferior by Australia’s white settler population (Moses 2000). Similarly, Australia’s female settler population was subordinate to the colonies’ male settlers. The colonial states seldom deployed members of its female population to engage in armed skirmishes on the frontier. Male settlers assumed the role of protectors of the colony’s female settlers (Moore 1998: 44).
State as protector

Feminist scholars have historically overlooked the role of the state as protector of the nation’s women (Young 2003: 2–3). Most classic and contemporary scholars focus on the one-dimensional view of the social contract between the citizen and the state. Young’s essay “The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State” (Young 2003: 1) constructs a plausible theory of how and why the state may enforce fixed gender roles in its military institution (Pateman 2008: 342–343). The relevance of Young’s essay arises from the particular geography to the way in which the state constructs the nation’s women as the protected sex. The state imagines men as the natural protector of the nation’s vulnerable women and by doing so replicates cultural archetypes that portray militarism as a masculine construct (e.g. Young 2003: 2–3).

By restricting women from engaging in armed offshore military service, the state constructs offshore fighting as a domain of male privilege; the nation’s women attend to the home and family while its men fight offshore. The male soldier defends the nation, and this role imagines men as protectors of women (Young 2003: 3–5). This social construction creates a binary similar to what Stiehm (1982: 374–375) terms the defender–defended gender binary, whereby it is the role of the nation’s all-male soldiers to defend its vulnerable women. By constructing the protector–protected binary, the state naturalises the masculine character of militarism and warfare and uses science, and biological science in particular, to enforce a civil–military gender gap (Wibben 2004: 101–103). The state makes biology the basis on which to naturalise the gendered character of Australia’s male-dominated military institution.
The protector–protected binary is hetero-normative and feminine subordination in this relationship is usually willing. The wife/mother of the household willingly adores her male partner for the physical protection he provides for her and their children (Young 2003: 3–5). This protector–protected binary upholds a sexual division of labour and power in the nation’s civilian society and military institution and imagines the armed forces as a dominantly masculine bastion of male exclusivity (Carter 1996: 104–105).

Since federation, Australia’s engagement in wars has occurred offshore in all instances with the exception of the Second World War. Historically, the state portrays the protection of Australia’s women by the nation’s men as a national imperative, necessary to support an imperial cause on the world stage (Pettman 1996: 16–17). This particular version of female safety and protection is historically unusual, as an external military force has rarely threatened the family home during Australia’s postcolonial history (Hancock 1993: 91). No enemy land army military force has penetrated Australia’s mainland during Australia’s post-federation history (e.g. Grey 2008: 66–287).

The democratic patriarchal state purposefully replicates the social construction of gender roles that imagine the nation’s men as protectors of women because the cultural normality of the protector–protected binary enables the state to wage war offshore in order to preserve the peace domestically (Young 2003: 3) and neuter the enemies within the nation (Young 2003: 8). The state purposefully positions itself as a just defender of its sovereignty and the nation’s vulnerable women and children (Young 2003: 4, 8). By mimicking the construct of the protective patriarchal family head, the state portrays itself as the seeker of a righteous cause (Young 2003: 4, 10).
By organising the military apparatus as a masculine entity, the state simultaneously constructs women’s bodies and minds as physically weaker than men’s bodies and minds (Connell 1987: 107). The mandatory exclusion of all women from controlling the state’s weapons that manage mass-violence, communicates symbolic messages concerning the embodiment of gendered roles. The state supports gender stereotypes that portray the female body as lacking the physical and mental capacities required to work in professions that manage large-scale violence and impose gruelling physical and emotional demands on professionals who work on the frontline in these organisations.

Female protectionism arguments are a “thin exterior” the executive manipulates to justify structures that uphold female subordination and male domination within powerful institutions (Brown 1992: 28). The executive is a patriarchal entity that consumes “great energy” in controlling the status quo of the hegemonic masculine character of the state and it actively replicates male-dominance in key state institutions (Connell 1987: 128). Men and other elites who control the state’s power structures rarely surrender their influence without a political fight or in some cases, resorting to violence (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 830, 840, 848).

The replication of a culture of female protectionism by the state poses broader symbolic implications for Australia’s Executive beyond the need to maintain internal and external security. The subordination of women to men within the military apparatus perpetuates a wider social order whereby men enjoy a privileged relationship within the state’s power structures (Brown 1992: 28–29). Preserving the status quo of the ADF’s GCP communicates symbolic messages concerning women’s relationship with the state. A
dominant message this policy conveys, from a liberal rights feminist perspective, is that gender is a social process and that the state can lawfully subordinate women to men in their nation’s military institution if it chooses to do so (Vojdik 2005: 306, 318–319). This argument is evident from how the state continues to assert its authority to control the full spectrum of women’s bodies and sexual lives in the public and private spheres. Examples of these controls include laws that restrict the right of women to have an abortion, purchase contraception and access reproductive technologies (Connell 1990: 528; Brown 1992: 29).

2.4 Interdisciplinary debates

In recent decades, feminist political scientists and international relations gender theorists such as Hudson (2014), Sjoberg (2010: 5–6), Wibben (e.g. Wibben and McBride 2012: 201 & 203), Hoogensen (e.g. Hoogensen and Stuvøy 2006: 218) and Shepherd (2010: 155) have built a contemporary epistemology that theorises gender relations in the domain of international security. These theorists advance Young’s theory of masculine protection by exploring women’s contributions to international security deeper into the post 9/11 security environment. They achieve this by analysing Western military interventions in states such as Libya, Afghanistan and Rwanda. These theorists demonstrate how imperial Western states continue to replicate gender roles that imagine women as natural born pacifists and agents of peace. The state simultaneously imagines men as natural protectors of vulnerable women and children. By doing so, Western states continue to reinforce patriarchal gender relations that exist in the domain of international security (Chandler 2008).
This thesis aims to contribute to knowledge by developing further the multidisciplinary approach to theorising gendered relations of international security and global warfare (Wibben 2004: 108). To understand gender relations in these domains, scholars must consider literature that centres on imperial history, as Western militaries and states dominate global warfare, and institutions that wield high power such as the World Bank. Furthermore, scholars must reconcile the biology versus social construction divide that stubbornly divides those who seek to resist and advance the status of women in the domain of global warfare (Wibben 2004: 104–109).

In contemporary times, Australia is less likely to engage in what Kaldor (2013: 4) terms “symmetrical war” – a form of battle that she argues last occurred on a grand scale in the Iran-Iraq War during the 1980s. The proliferation of warfare technologies among major civilisation powers means that symmetrical wars fought between even powers are likely to result in a stalemate that causes mass casualties and economic losses and no overall net gain to either side. Imperial powers such as the United States and their allies are more likely engage in offshore urban warfare against minor or middle powers similar to Western interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq (Kaldor 2013: 19). It is more efficient to cause mass destruction of the enemy’s infrastructure and defence personnel when they are concentrated in a narrow area such as metropolitan regions (Ezzat and Kaldor 2006: 24).

Western democratic powers such as America are more likely to favour engaging in short wars fought from the distance using hardware technologies such as stealthy airpower, cruise missiles (Kaldor 2003: 10) and drones (McBride and Wibben 2012: 200). Public
support among Western civilian populations erodes fast when their militaries record high casualties and fatalities in wars fought offshore. This is because their civilian populace is usually not willing to sacrifice large numbers of their defence personnel for military interventions offshore that are not essential to defend the security of their homeland (Kaldor 2000: 58).

“War and gender” and “women in the military” are the dominant gendered interdisciplinary approaches that examine the dynamics of gender relations in the armed forces (Cooke 2001: 181). The war and gender literature provides a specialist framework to analyse the role and place of women in the military during wartime. The women in the military literature theorises the role and place of women in the military during peacetime.

The war and gender literature, which first proliferated in the 1980s, predates the women in the military literature. This sequence is logical, as women’s military contribution to warfare is marginal prior to the new millennium – both in Western militaries and throughout the course of recorded history (Cooke 2001: 181). This historical context explains why these works focus overwhelmingly on challenging fixed binaries that imagine the role of the nation’s women as mothers and pacifists, and reinforce stereotypes that naturalise men as the nation’s warriors (e.g. Sylvester 1994: 56, 2004: 19–23). This distinction between ‘war and gender’ and ‘women in the military’ has become partially defunct. Women continue to serve in higher numbers in the armed forces of many nations and train to work in armed support roles that may fight the enemy face-to-face as a last resort (Cohn and Ruddick 2003).
Since the mid to late 1990s, most scholars of gender theory examine the role of women in the armed forces during wartime and peacetime. A prime example of this corpus of literature includes interdisciplinary research by Segal (1995) and (Segal et al. 2002) that examines the social, cultural, political and military factors that may cause the expansion and contraction of women’s participation in the armed forces. The shift in research has shifted from analysing women’s role outside of the military domain such as pacifists and mothers. Scholars focus their critique on policies and social structures that deny women the chance to assume combat and leadership roles in the military domain (e.g. Cohn 2000). The ever-growing numbers of women serving in national parliaments, corporations and other nation’s military forces (e.g. Israel) offers feminist scholars such as Cohn and Enloe (2003: 1, 192) and Ruddick (Cohn and Ruddick 2003: 18) credible evidence to reject the argument that it is the natural role of men to protect its vulnerable, fragile female population.

Empirical evidence analysed from an interdisciplinary perspective, shows how the state’s organising logic of the military may change when the national security threat is high. When the state no longer has the capacity to protect it women and children from attack, it may abandon the way it portrays women as the protected gender by integrating women into armed roles that fight the enemy as primary duties (e.g. combat) or in combat support duties where they may fight the enemy as a last resort. However, this feminisation of frontline fighting is invariably a temporary measure as the state removes women from these roles when the threat to national security passes (Segal 1995: 760–762).
The Soviet State also granted women access to a limited number of armed roles within combat units during the Second World War. Russia feared a military occupation by Germany’s Military Forces was imminent and this would mean the Russian state could not protect its women and children. After the threat of a military defeat was neutralised, Russia reinstated its GCP and discharged female military personnel from its combat corps (Goldstein 2003b: 15). This analysis of women’s participation in the military during warfare demonstrates how historically the construction of gendered military roles seeks to image women as the protected gender, as the integration of women into frontline military does not automatically erode military effectiveness (e.g. Segal 1995: 760–762).

The interdisciplinary literature offers a theoretical framework that can bridge the rights versus defence capability divisive debate (e.g. Goldstein 2003a). Liberal rights feminists argue that the state enforces a GCP partially or primarily as a means to replicate the patriarchal order-of-power that marginalises women by portraying them as the protected gender (e.g. Pettman 1996: 16–17). Some Defence scholars reject this feminist viewpoint and argue that the state enforces a GCP to maximise the ‘readiness’, which refers to the effectiveness of the military’s fighting capacities and they cite bioscience data to defend their position (e.g. Castle 1978: 118–119). The interdisciplinary approach allows scholars to review anthropological and evolutionary arguments, and bioscience research, and objectively assess rights versus readiness divisive debates, by showing how some women combatants can successfully integrate into a combat unit and perform combat duties to the minimum standards required of male fighters (e.g. Goldstein 2003a: 107, 113).
2.5 Conclusion

The origins of Australia’s civil–military gender gap are traceable to its colonial heritage whereby men assumed the role of protectors of women. Female protection arguments are an organising idea that justifies the need to preserve the dominant feature of Australia’s civil–military gendered gap. Segal’s interdisciplinary research offers a way to explore the conditionality of Australia’s civil–military gender gap as her empirical “Social norms [original capitalisation]” that construct ground combat as a “male prerogative”. This analysis proves that the integration of women into combat roles does not automatically erode the functional efficiency of combat fighting units in Australia’s armed forces and other nations.

Expanding the literature with reference to female protectionism arguments is important. Australia’s national identity imagines war heroes as key elements of myths that draw on violent stories of national origin. The patriarchal state portrays women as objects of male protection because it relies on the armed forces as the basic guarantor of male power. By replicating images of women as hapless victims of war, the state constructs women as the weaker gender that requires protection from the nation’s men and the masculine state.
Chapter Three       Research methods

3.1       Introduction

This study of Australia’s GCP centres on nine primary policy documents and public commentary put forward by military elites and political elites who defend Australia’s GCP in the public domain. This chapter identifies type of documents I analyse and outlines my methodological design. I also explain why the framework I adopt is appropriate to pursue my research question that aims to identify the themes to which defenders of Australia’s GCP appeal.

This chapter contains four main sections. The first part explores the descriptive content analysis method and I draw on the scholarship of research methods theorists, and in particular, Krippendorf (2004) and Neuendorf (2002) who have authored specialist handbooks on advanced qualitative content analysis techniques. I explain why the descriptive content analysis approach is the dominant method that underpins my thesis’s research design. The second part outlines the epistemological frameworks that govern the descriptive content analysis method. It also explains how the theoretical perspectives I adopt inform the methodological design I use to collect, analyse and interpret data. The third part examines other methodological parameters that shape this thesis’s research design. The fourth part examines the limitations and challenges of using the descriptive qualitative content analysis method and other methodologies I adopt, insofar as these assist me to pursue my research questions. In the fourth section, I explain how I modify my research design to maximise data integrity.
3.2 Research design

Unobtrusive qualitative content analysis methods are best suited to collect and study Defence policy documents and other evidence that is relevant to the bounds of my research. The vast majority of data that is relevant to these parameters are text (*e.g.* public speeches) and images (*e.g.* print media caricatures) printed on paper or stored in digital format (*e.g.* Spurling 2000). Examples of evidence stored on paper are Defence policy documents and archive records such as Federal Cabinet Minutes. Newspaper articles and scholarly journal articles are examples of evidence I collect/analyse that are stored as paper or in digital formats such as on web pages and software applications.

My research seeks out evidence that records the way individuals and institutions defend Australia’s GCP, and I explore how they communicate these messages via a medium that is accessible to the public. An example of data that I extract from a public institution includes Ministerial speeches that government agencies have uploaded onto their public access websites. An example of evidence I source from a privately owned entity includes news articles published by the *Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper. I have obtained newspaper stories published as online editions and printed editions, most of which are stored as microfiche files held at the University of Sydney Library, Darlington Campus. Supporters of the GCP intend their messages to be available for public consumption and this explains why I am not required to engage with obtrusive data collection methods such as surveys and interviews. I have engaged in fieldwork to obtain non-reactive data. I visited public access archives (*e.g.* the National Archives of Australia, Canberra) and other repositories such as libraries and the internet to obtain documentary records that are freely available to the public (Webb *et al.* 1981: 78–143). I use “content analysis” as the
dominant method and sub-methods within this category to analyse these primary and secondary data sources (Hsieh and Shannon 2005: 1, 277).

Public statements and commentary made by male political, military and media elites are integral to my research because they bring into the public arena the issues concerning the GCP that remain contested, and this evidence reveals the reasons why the persistence of this regime divides society. These political elites include the most senior representatives of the Australian Government, such as Australia’s Prime Ministers (e.g. Howard 2005) and Defence Ministers (e.g. Barnard 1974; Hill 2002; Smith 2011). They also include the most senior members of the ADF, such as the Chief of the ADF (e.g. Barrie 1999) and the ADF’s Chief of Staff (e.g. Grey in Hurst 1992: 12).

My data analysis centres on the ways supporters of Australia’s GCP aim to preserve and replicate deeply entrenched pre-existing social norms and cultural images that imagine the exclusion of women from combat as desirable and I theorise the reasons and motives why these individuals and institutions support this regime. For example, I examine how Australia’s mainstream print media routinely publish caricatures that parody the notion of a female combatant (e.g. Spurling 2000). These cultural images offer nuanced support for enforcing the policy status quo as they replicate entrenched cultural norms that portray the warrior archetype as an all-male national symbol. This textual and cultural analysis enables me to reveal the themes to which the state, Australia’s Defence Executive, ADF combat personnel, the media and other public figures appeal when they defend the GCP on the public record.
Qualitative content analysis

This thesis embarks on a descriptive qualitative content analysis study (Franzosi 2008: xxviii). The study is socio-historical as it examines a finite period in history to explore a social problem (Franzosi 2008: xxx). My analysis focuses on evidence dated from 1973 to 2013. The earlier date represents the commencing period in Australia’s martial history where the Executive began to document the reasons that justified its enforcement of a GCP in Australia’s military institution (e.g. Mahler 1974). This action also occurred partly in response to calls for gender equality raised by Australian citizens. Records stored at the National Archives of Australia contain correspondences written by these civilians during the 1970s. These letters are addressed to Federal Government Ministers and request these officials to justify the discriminatory employment restrictions the state imposes on women in Australia’s armed forces (e.g. Howard and Howard 1973). For example, in 1974 Australia’s Defence Minister Lance Barnard responded to a written complaint raised by Australian citizens Ms Pat Howard and Mr John Howard of Sydney Australia. Pat Howard and John Howard argue that Australia’s military forces discriminate against women because they exclude them from engaging in armed duties. In his letter Pat Howard and John Howard, Lance Barnard states:

The role of the Women’s Services is to replace men on a one for one basis, and is limited to establishment positions and employment which are of a non-combatant nature. (Lance Barnard, Minister for Defence 1974: 1)

The historical/comparative method is the dominant approach I use to analyse primary and secondary evidence. The focus and objectives of my research align with the core element that Mahoney and Rueschemeyer (2003: 7) argue underpins comparative historical studies. To work with this social sciences method it is:
essential to focus on comprehensive structures and large scale processes that provided powerful
cues to the patterning of social life, both at the macroscopic level and at the level of groups and
individuals (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003: 7)

My analysis considers the full context of relevant facts and events that concern
Australia’s military history. I also consider social changes that occur in Australia’s
civilian domain that may influence Defence policy and in particular, events that cause
society’s support for the enforcement of Australia’s GCP to increase or wane. I also
analyse other historical primary source Defence documents, such as Defence
communiqués and Department of Defence file notes stored at the National Archives of
Australia.

My research uses “manifest” and “latent” content analysis methods to examine the
ADF’s GCP documents and other evidence to explore the various themes to which elites
and others explicitly appeal (Hsieh and Shannon 2005: 1, 283). The biophysical
performance of the gendered martial combat body is an example of a dominant subject
matter that appears in the evidence. Discussions concerning the human anatomy are
invariably manifest as they explicitly cite data that refers to the superior performance of
the male gendered combat body and/or the inferior performance of the female gendered
combat body.

My research also uses latent content analysis as I deconstruct sentence structures and
choices of words to interpret coded messages implicit in the evidence (Hsieh and
Shannon 2005: 1, 283–1, 284; Babbie 2007: 308). An example of a theme implicitly
communicated in the evidence is the desire to uphold the hegemonic masculinity of the
ADF’s service-wide culture and its fighting units, especially within those frontline units located in Australia’s Land Army. This appeal is apparent when a speaker uses themes that defend the existence of social structures and cultural images that are consistent with the traits that Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue define hegemonic masculinity. For example, references to themes such as ‘public support’ are analogous to “cultural consent” as they refer to the notion of the democratic majority (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 829, 846 & 853). This support may be passive (i.e. apparent), such as references to the absence of mainstream protest among the female population. Support may refer to active consent. An example of this are recorded speeches that refer to the fact that Australia’s parliament was able to pass Section 43 of the Sex Discrimination Act by obtaining a majority in both houses (e.g. Hearn 2004; Ashcraft 2005: 71 & 83).

I am self-reflexive when arguing that a message is latent. Furthermore, I only refer to this behaviour in cases where the speaker explicitly appeals to the need to defend the GCP. This approach minimizes subjectivity that occurs when the defence of the GCP and the message is subtle. Furthermore, I triangulate statements made by one individual or institutional source with similar statements they make on the public record on other occasions, in order to confirm the speaker has a consistent position towards the GCP.

“Thematic” analysis (Franzosi 2008: xxxv) is a dominant method I use to examine evidence. I use this approach to identify and understand the themes to which elites and others appeal when they defend the GCP or explore the reasons why this policy is enforced. Before writing the Literature Review Chapter, I read 30 of the most cited academic works that examine the range of reasons why a GCP is upheld in Australia (e.g. Smith 2000; Segal et al. 2002) and other nations (e.g. Segal 1995; Carreiras 2006).
These scholarly works identify the dominant themes and sub-themes that shape policy debates. This exercise enabled me to conceptualise the breadth of public debates and classify a large list of factors into a system that had more meaning for my analysis of Defence policy.

There are six components of a content analysis based research design and I use these tools to identify latent and manifest themes in the evidence. These are “unitizing”, “sampling”, “recording/coding”, “reducing”, “inferring” and “narrating” (Krippendorf 2004: 83). In the next six sub-sections, I explain how these components shape the way I select and analyse the data I explore in my introductory chapters and data analysis chapters.

3.2.1 Unitizing

The counting of meanings is central to this study. My analysis divides the evidence into “distinct public issues” (Krippendorf 2004: 97–98) to identify themes, issues and topics defenders of the GCP seek to arouse in the public domain. I then map these themes to the scholarly literature that theorises the reasons why the state enforces a gendered division of labour in the military institution, such as a GCP. This analysis enables me to conceptualise the reasons why defenders of Australia’s GCP refer to particular themes and sub-themes.

I count the number of references to explicit themes that recur in the evidence. Differences between the structures, functions and performances of gendered bodies are
an example of a topic that dominates textual data and other forms of evidence such as cultural images. A dominant sub-theme that appears in this evidence is the argument that the female gendered combat body is ‘unable’ to perform combat and other physically and mentally demanding occupational duties. For example, discussions about male blood hormone levels repeat in textual evidence and this is an example of an explicit theme that refers to the biophysical functions of the male body (e.g. Goyne 2003: 85).

I also unitise (i.e. count) themes that appear in the evidence which are nuanced, i.e., they are communicated implicitly using coded language via the use of metaphors and other forms of coded language. An example of a latent theme that recurs in the evidence includes textual statements that defend the universal subordination of women to men in the national imagination. Those who defend male privilege rarely pursue this agenda using explicit language.

I adopt two overlapping approaches to identify and unitise thematic references that exist in the evidence. The first method searches for a direct match of key conceptual topics that dominate the theoretical literature and the evidence. This thematic ‘fit’ is evident when feminist scholar Judith Stiehm (1982: 367) and ADF Senior Officer Lieutenant Colonel Linda Campbell (2000: 10) refer to female protectionism arguments to explain why the state may deny women the right to serve in combat roles. Stiehm (1982: 367) refers to “protectors” and Campbell (2000: 10) refers to “protectionism”.

The second method requires me to search for an indirect match, using closely related synonyms. I record and count the number of themes I identify in each data source. I do
not explore economic arguments in this thesis. Economic debates focus on the high costs required to integrate women into combat service. For example, some supporters of the GCP argue that the ADF cannot afford to fund the facilities required to accommodate female combat personnel on submarines, such as the creation of separate female sleeping quarters and female-only bathroom facilities (e.g. Robertson 1995). References to economic factors concern the high cost of integrating women into combat roles and reference to this topic comprises less than 1% of the themes that recur in the evidence. Moreover, statements concerning the high cost of integrating women into the ADF’s combat ranks last appear in a scholarly article in 1995 (Robertson 1995). The Ferguson Report is the most recent primary source that examines economic arguments on the public record (Dunn 1998: 10).

Table One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual theme</th>
<th>Thematic count</th>
<th>Data chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender and nation: Total 265</td>
<td></td>
<td>Four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men as warriors 77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military tradition 74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women as bearers of life 52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANZAC Myth 24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others 38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gender and embodiment Total 372</td>
<td></td>
<td>Five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gender and power (Hegemonic masculinity) Total 128</td>
<td></td>
<td>Six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Gender and economy Total 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not examined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total themes 769</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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3.2.2 Sampling

This thesis does not employ statistical techniques such as “purposive sampling” (Krippendorf 2004: 76) as the dataset I inspect accounts for more than 90% of the known population and I have no cause to believe the data I did not examine are not representative of the evidence I review. Only a few hundred primary source documents exist on the public record that relates to this thesis’s research questions. I draw this conclusion from my exhaustive search of leading research databases and online search engines. For example, I utilised the Department of Defence’s search engine, Google’s search engine and Factiva to extract relevant print media stories, press releases and any other primary data sources that examine aspects of the history of Australia’s GCP. Key search words I used included combinations of word strings such as ‘Australia’, ‘Australian Defence Force’, ‘women’, ‘female/s’, ‘gender’, ‘combat’, ‘military’, ‘army’, ‘defence’, ‘Infantry’, ‘warrior/s’, ‘armed forces’, ‘front’ and ‘frontline’.

I compare the results from data searches, outlined above, to scholarly research and industry research that explores the ADF’s GCP and women’s service in Australia’s armed forces, such as those publications I explore in Chapter 1.3 under the sub-header titled ‘Sociological Contribution’. I have read these publications and their list of references to identify other relevant data sources that exist beyond those I located using database searches and online search engines. For example, I inspected the bibliographies of doctoral theses authored by Buttsworth (2003: 317–394) and Bridges (2005: 277–305). I also reviewed two websites owned and managed by The University of Technology, Sydney. The first web page has the title “Women and Combat” (University

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of Technology Sydney 2012a). This website maintains a list of documents that relate directly to the history of Australia’s GCP, although not all records listed on this website relate to the scope of my research. Examples of records listed on this site include journal articles, media stories and Defence press releases. On 1 January 2013, this website listed 72 records. The second website has the title “A Centenary of Women and The Australian Army” (University of Technology Sydney 2012b). On 1 January 2013, this website listed 56 records.

My independent data search located 112 pieces of primary source evidence in addition to those listed in doctoral theses by Buttsworth (2003), Bridges (2005) and the two University of Technology, Sydney websites. Examples of this evidence include media stories and Defence press releases. I also obtained declassified records held by the National Archives of Australia dated prior to 1985 and arranged for two archives to be declassified digitised and uploaded on this institution’s website. These Archives include documents authored by senior members of Australia’s War Cabinet, Australia’s Department of Defence and Australia’s Defence Ministry (e.g. Whitlam 1974). I have extensively searched all relevant public sources. I conclude I have extracted the vast majority of primary and secondary data sources that relate to the scope of my research.

The ADF’s GCP documents are the core primary data sources that underpin my policy analysis. These Reports provide a focal point to explore how historical events shape Defence policy processes as well as developments and debates related to Australia’s GCP. The content of these policy documents underpin the dominant conceptual arguments I explore throughout my data analysis chapters. In most cases, the public
release of the ADF’s GCP documents is the historical event that causes political, military and other elites to defend the GCP in the public domain, as illustrated in Table Two.


**Sociological contribution**

I aim to analyse conceptually the dominant policy arguments contained in the nine ADF GCP documents published between 1978 and 2001. Table Two summarises the historical context, objectives and the impact of these policy documents. My research provides an impartial account of the content of these policy documents.
### Table Two

**ADF GCP Documents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy document title</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Context and objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Regular Officer Development Committee Report</td>
<td>Australian Army (1978b)</td>
<td>Assesses whether the status of women in Australia’s and TTCP member nations’ Armed Forces violate Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 1958 Treaty. Focuses on cultural and operational factors that justify enforcing the GCP in Land Army roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The RODC Report Part A</td>
<td>Australian Army (1978a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Thomas Report (ADF/TTCP member nations)</td>
<td>Thomas (1978)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Quinn and Toulson Report (ADF/TTCP member nations)</td>
<td>Quinn and Toulson (1987)</td>
<td>Explores cultural and operational arguments for enforcing and reversing the GCP in TTCP member nations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. DI (G) PERS 32-1: Employment of Women in the ADF</td>
<td>ADF (1994)</td>
<td>Clarifies the ADF’s partial exemption from the Sex Discrimination Act and lists eight roles classified as “Direct Combat”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The Burton Report</td>
<td>Burton (1996)</td>
<td>Commissioned by the Australian Government to identify structural barriers that undermine the advancement of female personnel in the ADF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The Holden and Tanner Report (ADF/TTCP member nations)</td>
<td>Holden and Tanner (2001)</td>
<td>Clarifies women’s service conditions in TTCP nation’s Armed Forces so members may “keep informed and reciprocally educated about each other’s policies and practices (Holden and Tanner 2001: i).”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Impact and outcomes:** The context of each report responds to external criticism that Australia’s GCP is unnecessary and is an unjust form of discrimination. The objective of each report aims to provide justification for the reasons that explain why Australia’s armed forces uphold a GCP and the persistence of this regime is suggestive that these reports achieve their purpose. Those sections in each Report that discuss the GCP examine why the ADF/TTCP member nations enforce this policy. They also explore operational problems that may transpire if the state annuls the GCP. These policy documents do not authorise the integration of women into combat-support roles and they do not authorise changes to the GCP. The ADF issued press releases to announce each Report and Australia’s media published stories about the status of the GCP. For example, *The Herald Sun* responded to The Ferguson Report and published a media article to inform its readers that this policy document recommends women remain excluded from participating in military roles that engage the enemy “hand-to-hand” (McPhedran 1998: 1, 4). The print and broadcast media are the dominant institutions that report the status of the GCP documents. These media assembled expert panels to debate the merits of preserving and reversing the GCP. For example, ABC Radio formed a panel that included Defence leaders, feminist academics, Government Ministers and parliamentarians from the minor parties to debate the status of the GCP. Public reaction to the release of the ADF’s GCP documents has never caused the state to annul its GCP in Direct Combat roles. The most recent GCP document is dated 2001. The Australian Government first expressed in principle support to reverse the GCP in 2009.
I use two criteria to determine whether data is relevant and classify my evidence as primary data and secondary data. The first condition is that the individuals or institutions must provide at least one specific explanation to defend the ADF’s GCP. Identifying these subjects in the primary evidence enables me to unitize, classify and analyse the latent and/or manifest themes the person or institution appeals to in the public domain.

The second criterion is that the person or institution who is the creator of the data source must possess qualifications and/or professional experience in a field that relates to Defence policy or social policy. In some instances, an institution is the creator of a data source and no person/s claim authorship. For example, the Australian Army Regular Officers Development Committee claims credit as author of The RODC Report Part A (e.g. Australian Army 1978a: 5). Other Defence policy documents credit senior Defence personnel from the ADF and/or Australia’s Defence Secretariats as the author. For example, Lieutenant Colonel Linda Campbell is the author of The Campbell Report. Campbell is a senior personnel officer who works for the Directorate of Strategic Personnel Planning and Research at the Department of Defence in Canberra (Campbell 2000: i).

Australia’s media and scholarly publishers acknowledge that these persons/institutions are knowledgeable about Defence and/or social policy issues. A person’s qualifications and/or experience offers some authority to the opinions they put forward on the public record, whether these opinions are personal or official accounts provided on behalf of an institution such as the ADF Executive. Convenors of other public forums (e.g. academic conferences) beyond the mainstream media routinely invite these individuals and leaders from institutions such as the Australian Army to discuss their perspectives and opinions.
concerning Australia’s GCP. In this capacity, these speakers may influence Defence policy debate in the public arena. Other examples of elites and other individuals who defend Australia’s GCP in the public domain include senior representatives from the Christian Church (e.g. Pell 2009); the Australian Defence Association (e.g. Australian Defence Association 2007a), the Women’s Electoral Lobby (e.g. Maddison 1999), and the Returned and Services’ League (RSL) (e.g. Ruxton 1990).

Table Three, overleaf, summarises the 16 types of evidence I analyse and the dominant contribution I extract from each data category. Working with these combined data sets enables me to analyse and unitize the themes to which individuals or institutions appeal on the public record when they defend the ADF’s GCP. I also count how frequently these themes recur in the evidence. This quantification enables me to identify which topics dominate public discussion. When drawing inferences, I weigh my analysis according to the frequency each subject matter appears in each piece of the evidence. I also take into account how often references to a theme recurs in my full data set to determine whether this topic is dominant among a range of speakers. Furthermore, I consider the emphasis the speaker places on each theme in the full content of their discussion. I also highlight cases where an argument appears in a prominent place within the broader context of the data source, such as in the Executive Summary of a policy report. Where a topic appears in a prominent place, I explicitly state that this subject matter appears in a high visibility location. Furthermore, I explore the reason/s why this theme appears in this setting and the impact this would likely have on the intended audience and the likely motive that explains why the person or institution elevates their discussion of that topic.
Table Three

Data Types and Thematic Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document type</th>
<th>Dominant information extracted and commentary</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Example cited in this thesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Parliamentary records: Submissions to Senate Inquiries/Australian Government responses</td>
<td>Official arguments put forward to defend the GCP within the Australian Parliament by those with Defence policy and/or social policy experience. Federal politicians and Defence leaders dominate these sources.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Department of Defence (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Governance:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <em>Sex Discrimination Act</em></td>
<td>Defines the scope of specific ADF combat roles that remain closed to women <em>e.g.</em> Infantry.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Attorney General’s Department (1984a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Defence policy documents: i. GCP Documents ii. Other policy documents; <em>e.g.</em> DSTO research</td>
<td>Official arguments provided by the Executive and ADF officers/senior executives of the various reasons why it is desirable to exclude women from working in combat roles. This evidence also includes historical accounts of why the state enforces the GCP. Defence bioscience research measures performances of the male and female martial body.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Campbell (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Government correspondences to members of the public</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mahler (1974)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Other Defence and Government documents: <em>e.g.</em> The Bryson Report</td>
<td>Provide historical context about relevant facts such as the ADF’s warrior culture.</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Bryson (1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Declassified Cabinet Archives</td>
<td>The state justifies why the Executive enforces the GCP.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Barnard (1974)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Newspaper editorials/articles</td>
<td>How the media reports public debate. The media determines whose opinions are published and how much textual space it allocates to each discussant. ADF personnel who speak in the media in many cases express their private opinions and not official Defence positions.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Sheridan (2009); Stewart (1992); The Age (1999); ABC (2005a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Newspaper interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Newspaper images</td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Radio broadcasts</td>
<td></td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Academic/professional trade journal articles</td>
<td>Personal arguments put forward by ADF personnel to justify the GCP or a historical discussion of this policy.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Castle (1978)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. ADF personnel attitude surveys</td>
<td>Measures support for the GCP among ADF personnel.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Little (1991a; 1991b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total documents</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>345</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I also analyse secondary source documents to establish historical facts and the context that underpins policy development and public debate. For example, A quarterly newsletter published by the University of Wollongong in 2009 announces that this University has received a grant from the Australian Government for $1.6M to establish gender-neutral physical employment standards that aim to allow women and men to apply for admission into combat service at some unspecified time in the future (University of Wollongong 2009: 7). This document cites Defence Science Minister Greg Combet, who states that overturning the GCP is dependent on the outcomes of this research. The document provides evidence that the Australian Government claims that it upholds the GCP because it aims to uphold combat capability, and not because it wishes to enforce fixed gender roles in its military institution.

3.2.3 Recording, coding and reducing

The recording/coding phase of my research design required me to create a permanent database to classify and map evidence to the conceptual themes and sub-themes I explore in my data analysis chapters. An example which exists in my evidence are images that portray Australia’s women as “beautiful souls” (e.g. Elshtain 1982: 341) in the national project. I have created an inventory database that counts the number of times each theme appears in the evidence and weigh my analysis accordingly.

I use the “thematic content analysis” method to analyse, interpret, classify and code the evidence (Berg 2007: 317). Working with this method requires me to identify references to peculiar “words”, “characters” (persons), “items”, “concepts”, “semantics” (Berg
“themes”, “codes”, “theoretical ideas” and “world views” in the minds of the person/s and institutional authors that defend Australia’s GCP in the public domain (Gomm 2004: 10, 189).

Tables Four (a), Four (b) and Four (c) below illustrate how some evidence contains reference to more than one theme. I have copied these documents and archived these individual records in the relevant folders. Some evidence contains references to more than one sub-theme within the same data source. I count the number of references to each sub-theme. This quantification enables me to reduce 345 pieces of evidence into three major conceptual themes that exist in the scholarly literature (e.g. nationalism) and twelve subthemes (e.g. men as the nation’s warriors) (e.g. Krippendorf 2004: 84–85).

Table Four (a)

Extract of Thematic Coding Records

Theme One – Gender and Nationalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Record</th>
<th>Archive Folder</th>
<th>Unique Document Number</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sub theme</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>The Age (1999)</td>
<td>Women as the nation’s beautiful souls</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Evidence is a caricature (visual).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Quinn and Toulson (1987: 3)</td>
<td>Men as the nation’s warriors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>GCP document (TTCP).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total count of all documents (extract)

1. Women as the nation’s beautiful souls
2. Men as the nation’s warriors
3. ANZAC myth

21
77
24
### Table Four (b)

**Extract of Thematic Coding Records**

**Theme Two – Gender and Bio-regulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Record</th>
<th>Archive Folder</th>
<th>Unique Document Number</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sub theme</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1b.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>Goyne (2003)</td>
<td>1. Hormones</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Author is a qualified psychologist employed by Australia’s Department of Defence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Stress and coping</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total count of all documents (extract)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub theme</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hormones</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Stress and coping</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table Four (c)

**Extract of Thematic Coding Records**

**Theme Three – Gender and Hegemonic Masculinity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Record</th>
<th>Archive Folder</th>
<th>Unique Document Number</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sub theme</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1c.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>Burton (1996: 38)</td>
<td>1. Critical mass</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Links critical mass to harassment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total count of all documents (extract)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub theme</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Refers to Infantry</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Critical mass</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.4 Inferring

Discussion in this sub-section explores two “inferential analysis” tools I use to analyse data and draw inferences. These tools are sub-methods within the broader field of content analysis (Krippendorf 2004: 45). It also explains why each inferential method is appropriate to pursuing individual objectives using specific content analysis techniques. The first analytical technique identifies “the [true] intentions and other characteristics of the communicators” (Krippendorf 2004: 45) who defend the ADF’s GCP on the public record. The second approach reveals “the [true] focus of attention” (Krippendorf 2004: 46) defenders of the ADF’s GCP seek to arouse in the public domain.

My research project aims to understand “how language and forms of talk and text are used to create particular ways of understanding a phenomenon” (Lawler 1998: 76) or an interpretation of the world (Gomm 2004: 246). In particular, I focus on the reason/s defenders of the GCP offer to justify the need to preserve this regime. When using qualitative content analysis techniques I consider the historical and political context of the data’s date of origin and I take into account how this might have influenced this evidence. I also deconstruct textual narratives to unravel the speaker’s deeper feelings about the beliefs, understandings and forms of knowledge they portray in the evidence (Lawler 1998: 76).

My methodological approach analyses all 345 pieces of data that relate to my research questions, and I review this body of material before I draw firm inferences. This systematic review of the evidence enables me to compare opinions, statements, arguments and perspectives that appear in the public domain at different points in time.
This holistic approach to analysis enables me to identify themes that are dominant only during a fixed period. It also allows me to identify shifts in policy debate that occur over time (e.g. Lustick 1996; Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 1997). Where a theme is dominant only during a finite period, my discussion states the time range where this approach to debate is popular. Furthermore, I outline the social and historical context that explains this pattern in the evidence and explicitly connect these details to the conceptual argument I discuss.

**Context and reflexivity**

My data analysis design is reflexive and considers historical context at all times. I constantly evaluate the “situatedness” of each data source. This allows me to take into account the socio-political context of the period from which the data originates and how social forces peculiar to time and space may influence public debate (e.g. Lustick 1996; Rohlfing et al. 2003). When reviewing data, I first identify its date of origin before performing other analysis. When drawing inferences, I consider how historical events and contemporary developments peculiar to a specific time and space may shape the content and tone of this evidence. This includes macro influences such as social trends that transpire in Australia’s society or globally. I also consider historical events and developments particular to a narrow space, such as social changes that occur only within Australia’s military institution.

In most instances, I can gauge sufficient information about the political and historical context from the data source. For example, media articles that feature a defence of the
GCP invariably occur because the article reports changes to Australia’s GCP. The story normally provides policy context about actual or proposed changes to the GCP in the introduction section, such as when Stewart’s (1992: 19) newspaper article chronicles the integration of women into combat-related roles in the RAN and RAAF in 1992. My analysis considers how the ADF’s GCP documents, political elites, military elites and other sources cite different themes and arguments over time to defend the GCP. Moreover, I also explore how and why members of particular elite groups (e.g. senior ADF combat officers), social groups and institutions alter the emphasis and weight they attribute to certain factors that justify the enforcement of this regime. In most cases the increased or decreased popularity of arguments that appear in the data over time is evidence that the individual or institution responds to attitude shifts that transpire in Australia’s civilian society over time.

The historical and political context of public speeches is evident from the date and title of the speech. The introduction section of each speech also provides background policy detail. For example, Defence and Federal Government leaders present speeches at academic conferences and other forums hosted by organised women’s groups such as the ADF Women’s Defence Network. These forums invariably have a political element. Members of Australia’s federal political parties have presented invited speeches at these forums. For example, at a ‘Women in the Military’ conference held in Canberra in 2000, the incumbent Federal Leader of the Australian Democrats, Natasha Stott-Despoja publicly criticises the ADF’s GCP and argues that it is a negative form of discrimination against women that is unfair and cannot be justified by the state (Stott-Despoja 2000).
I consider how the speaker’s desire to appease an audience might influence the way the presenter emphasises certain themes and omits references to sensitive topics relevant to the objective and context of their discussion (Lustick 1996; Rohlfing et al. 2003). I illustrate the relevance and impact of these contexts when I analyse data. For example, I use “text analysis” (Steen 2010: 184) techniques to examine how public speeches made by Defence and Government officials communicate latent and manifest messages, depending on whether the speaker wishes to pose an explicit argument (i.e. manifest) or convey a subtle argument (i.e. latent). In all instances, I carefully examine the entire text that quotes a person or institution’s statement to ensure that I do not misinterpret any extract passage and misquote the person out of context. Where I quote or cite written text, the interpretation I offer is always consistent with the message/s the author conveys within the entire piece of work that I analyse.

**Conversation analysis**

I use conversation analysis techniques to identify and examine themes and messages that appear in naturally occurring speech. Conversation is a sub-method within the content analysis family (Krippendorf 2004: 67). I also employ this method to analyse data where a speaker responds to questions or comments raised by one or more other speakers (Billig 1999: 545). For example, I inspect transcripts that record Defence forum panels broadcasted by ABC Radio. These textual data capture policy debates that occur on live radio and I extract the latent and/or manifest themes each presenter communicates.

Using conversation analysis techniques allows me to explore how statements made by another speaker shape the answer the respondent provides. For example, I note how
Defence and Government leaders accuse the other party of being the principle supporter of the GCP (e.g. Hawley in ABC 2002: NP). This analysis provides me with policy context and leads me to conclude that Australia’s Defence leaders and Federal Ministers do not wish the public to view them as the sole or dominant enforcer of the GCP. Using this analytical technique requires me to consider all other known facts and contexts concerning the respondent and the status of the GCP at that point in time. I always analyse the full interview transcript to identify whether the speaker consistently uses particular words and language structures to achieve a strategic objective (e.g. Neuendorf 2002: 7).

**Image analysis**

I use image analysis to explore non-textual evidence in order to draw inferences. Image analysis is a specific form of content analysis that requires the researcher to scrutinise non-textual data. An example of an image includes sketches that Australia’s mainstream print media publish in newspapers to complement a news article that supports this nation’s GCP. Those who communicate a political message using images (e.g. propaganda) may aim to arouse a person’s deepest feelings, such as empathy or joy, and this objective may be conscious or subconscious. This approach to communication has a biological basis, because the human’s visual cognitive processes predate the evolution of their ability to process spoken words (Harper 2002: 13), the latter skill being one that is associated with text, such as when a person reads a new article aloud or within their mind. When analysing images, I use explicit language to theorise which emotions the creator/publisher of the image aims to provoke. I do this by analysing the context of the news article and policy developments that transpire around the time of publication.
I also explore text such as policy discussion that refers to cultural images such as Australia’s war myths and war memorials. References to myths and archetypes draw on unconscious associations that prevail in the nation’s collective psyche. These associations aim to serve persuasive purposes by communicating latent messages to their intended audience (Charteris-Black 2011: 22).

3.2.5 Narrating

The narrating stage of a qualitative content analysis study requires me to draw conclusions from the content I collect and analyse, using appropriate research methodologies and conventions such as within method triangulation, so readers of this research have confidence in my results and can comprehend my arguments. The narrating stage requires me to disseminate my research (Krippendorf 2004: 85). This thesis shall be archived online as a digital thesis in an open-access repository managed by the University of Sydney and a copy shall be stored the this University’s Rare Book Collection at Fisher Library University, Darlington Campus, Sydney.

The Conclusion Chapter narrates the findings of this thesis. In this section, I examine the social implications of the research findings. Furthermore, I suggest policy recommendations for Defence and Government leaders that might promote gender quality in Australia’s armed forces (Krippendorf 2004: 85).
3.3 Epistemology

Social constructionist epistemology is the research paradigms that align with my thesis questions (e.g. Creswell 2007: 20–21). Knowledge and meaning concerning the nature and degree of women’s military participation is socially constructed:

Women’s military roles are socially constructed [my emphasis]: public policy, norms, and women’s behaviour are shaped, at least in part, by public discourse (Segal 1995: 761).

Language is rarely a neutral mode of communication, but exists with reference to a speaker’s own personal beliefs, experiences and biases. Moreover, social knowledge is relativist; it is dependent upon human practices and the interplay between people and the environment (Crotty 1998: 42). Normative interpretations of public policy may vary among individuals within a society and persons who live in different societies due to various social, cultural and political forces. Examples of these factors include a person’s religion, cultural background, country-of-origin, life-experiences, geographic environment, biological makeup, education and ideology (Giddens 1993: 649–671).

Gender and media

The commercial media communicates unstated messages their corporate owners wish to impose (Gerbner 1985; Neuendorf 2002: 20). This power relationship is not a ‘one-way’ construct. To some degree, the mainstream commercial media must present stories in a manner that appeal to its readership if they wish to thrive as a profitable entity over the long-term (Neuendorf 2002: 71).
Gender studies research that analyses print media poses unique challenges for qualitative content analysis research because the media frequently engages in agenda-setting (Neuendorf 2002: 201, 205). Australia’s print media is not a benign neutral power structure that merely reports facts as news. This institution also does not necessarily report public interest stories in a way the majority of their readers wish to read them. Two patriarchal corporations dominate Australia’s mainstream print media – News Corp and Fairfax. These corporations rarely appoint women as Director or Editors. Australia’s print media are patriarchal institutions that pursue profit maximisation as a commercial objective. Spurling (2000) argues that Australia’s media invariably sells more newspapers when they portray fixed binaries that polarise gendered roles. They are also more commercially successful when they do not challenge the *status quo* of the patriarchal society. Her research uses cultural studies evidence to analyse print media text and images to support her claims (Spurling 2000). Cultural stereotypes that portray work roles as feminine or masculine tend to favour male elites, who also dominate leadership roles in most work sectors in Australia (Summers 2008).

Western print media routinely publishes stories and images that replicate the pre-existing gendered order-of-power. One way it does this is by using text and images to portray fixed binaries that stereotype gender roles as masculine and feminine. This often occurs when the media reports the role and place of women and men in the work sector. For example, print media “surveillance” (Krippendorf 2004: 74) is generally more critical of the shapes and performances of the female anatomy. This media routinely sexualises women’s bodies and focuses on those feminine features that distinguish the male body from the female body. In contrast to its representation of the female form, print media
images tend to focus on men’s faces and these articles often exclude a male’s body from the photographic image it embeds into the article. Furthermore, women who do not have feminine (*i.e.* petite) bodies attract significantly more critical attention in the print media than do obese men and petite men (Neuendorf 2002: 202). The sexualisation of female military personnel in the media is of consequence to my research questions, because it trivialises women’s contribution to the armed forces, which in turn replicates norms that construct militarism as a masculine construction (*e.g.* Spurling 2000).

**Policy and institutions**

I use policy analysis tools to inspect data sources that refer to the many “institutional realities” that shape the creation and implementation of government policy (Krippendorf 2004: 77). I have customised my epistemological framework to account for the unique institutional, political and policy dimensions I explore in this thesis (Krippendorf 2004).

I have engaged in background research to understand the “policy process” (Sabatier 1999: 3) so I can understand the multitude of factors that cause the state to create and modify legislation and public policies. I have researched Australia’s socio-political history, and this includes the period of Australia’s colonial past and the period after this nation became a federation. I have researched the behaviours and motivations of the “actors” (Sabatier 1999: 3) that seek to influence Australia’s civil–military relations and the formulation of its Defence policies. A dominant way that these individuals or institutions defend the GCP is by engaging in debate in the public arena. Discovering this knowledge about policy processes and how it relates to the history of Australia’s GCP
required me to examine relevant public records such as Federal Hansard and ministerial speeches. I analyse these sources to discover how elites, institutions and others defend Australia’s GCP in the public domain:

Policy debates among actors in the course of legislative hearings, litigation, and proposed administrative regulations typically involve very technical disputes over the severity of a problem, its causes, and the probable impacts of alternative policy solutions. Understanding the policy process requires attention to the role that such debates play in the overall process [my emphasis] (Sabatier 1999: 4).

This background research enables me to speculate about the personal and institutional viewpoints that motivate these individuals or institutions to resist the full or partial reversal of the ADF’s GCP. It also enables me to understand the political tactics these actors employ to pressure the state to uphold this gendered regime in Australia’s armed forces (e.g. Smith 1995; 2000).

3.4 Methodological design

The interpretive qualitative theoretical perspective underpins this thesis’s methodological design as my research examines historical and social aspects that shape Australia’s civil–military relations and Defence policy (Crotty 1998: 66–67; Gomm 2004: 7; Creswell 2007: 20). Moreover, my investigation seeks to understand aspects of the social world. I explore how individuals view and influence their society and I reflect on this information when I analyse the evidence. My research seeks to locate “culturally derived and historically situated” (Crotty 1998: 66) understandings of the social world. I use this knowledge to identify the ways in which defenders of the ADF’s GCP refer to particular themes such as ‘gender and nation’. I also endeavour to understand why these
individuals or institutions refer to these subject matters when they defend this policy in the public domain.

Reflexive design considerations underpin this thesis’s methodological framework. I reflect critically on myself as a researcher, teacher and learner. At all times, I critically examine the biases, shortcomings and multiple perspectives I bring to this research project. I modify my methodological design to eliminate all self-identified biases in order to maximise the integrity of this research (Lincoln and Guba 2000: 183–184). For example, I do not adopt a hypothesis to speculate what conclusions I might draw after analysing and interpreting my data set. This decision reduces the possibility I will subconsciously select and analyse data in a manner likely to validate my hypothesis (Wilson and Keil 2001: 731).

Data replicability, reliability and validity are the cornerstones of qualitative content analysis research (Krippendorf 2004: 18). I analyse 345 pieces of evidence dated between 1970 and 2014 and I have obtained a similarly size data set from each decade. Working with a large body of records and other non-documentary sources enables me to triangulate and validate the reliability of all data. I use the “triangulation between sources” to validate the reliability my scholarly analysis and the conclusions I draw (Gomm 2004: 146). Applying this triangulation technique legitimises this thesis’s argumentative validity. Other researchers who replicate this thesis’s research questions and scope using a similar methodological framework and evidence should confirm the inferences I draw in this thesis. I have gathered and analysed an almost exhaustive list of relevant documentary sources. I therefore do not need to collect representative data samples from the population to draw inferences (Nagel 1992: 153; Brock-Utne 1996: 153).
615). I extract the majority of the population data there and so there is a very low risk of sample bias and there is negligible risk that I use non-representative data to reach conclusions.

**Cross-national research**

Discussion in this thesis on occasion compares Australia’s GCP to other nations’ Defence policies that restrict women from engaging in combat roles and other duties such as combat-support work categories. The methodology adopted for cross-national comparative sociological studies is similar to those tools required for within-nation comparative research (Hantrais and Mangen 1996: 3–4). Cross-national analysis must negotiate “descriptive”, “evaluative” and “analytical” challenges that confront all types of social research. These notably include the need to triangulate multiple data sets obtained via multiple data collection methods (Hantrais and Mangen 1996: 4). I adopt these methodologies at all times.

My cross-national policy analysis conforms to the tenets King (1973) argues are essential to maximise the benefits obtainable from multi-national studies. I compare nations with legal, political, economic and judicial structures that share major similarities to Australia. I review Defence policies of sovereign nations that share similar cultural and political structures and heritages to Australia. These include references to western and European nations, such as the so-called “CANZUKUS” (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and the United States) group of nations (Bondy 2005: 4). These five nations are the five members of TTCP, the cross-national Defence Secretariat that shares military
intelligence. The existence of TTCP is evidence that these nations have similar cultural heritages, common values and that their global foreign policies are closely aligned (TTCP 2012).

3.5 Limitations and challenges

The limited availability of classified Government data is a challenge to policy-based Defence research (Kovitz 1998: 154–155). Pursuant to Federal Australian legislation, the public may not inspect most classified military records and Australian Government Cabinet in Confidence documents for a period of 30 years (National Archives of Australia 2008). This research limitation does not undermine the integrity of this thesis’s data collection and analysis. According to Bridges (2005: 61–62), Defence Reports authored by Burton (1996), Quinn (1996), Dunn (1998) and Grey (‘The Grey Report’) (1998) are the most relevant contemporary Defence documents that discuss the role and status of women in the ADF, circa 2005. The scope and content of The Grey Report has no direct relevance to this thesis. This Parliamentary Inquiry reviews the policies and practices that deal with sexual harassment and sexual offences at the ADFA during the late 1990s (Grey 1998). I have obtained copies of all Reports Bridges lists in her doctoral thesis.

I have obtained copies of all relevant Defence archives dated prior to 1985, which are those records that no longer hold ‘classified’ status per the so-called 30-year rule. With rare exceptions, classified Cabinet documents are available for public inspection 30 years after the year they are dated. This fact is widely known by Cabinet Ministers. I argue that
these documents therefore reflect a peculiar way that senior government Ministers explore and defend the history of the GCP on the public record. Government Ministers are aware the public cannot inspect Cabinet records for at least 30 years and so it is therefore unlikely the authors of classified documents purposefully use rhetoric to influence contemporary public opinion and I consider this possibility when I analyse declassified archive records.

A potential limitation of research that investigates discrimination against female military personnel is that personal emotions and viewpoints can contaminate data. The integration of women into frontline military roles is a sensitive and controversial public topic because many men and women possess strong personal opinions about whether a GCP is a legitimate intervention. This challenge mostly relates to obtrusive research where participants purposefully seek to influence the outcome of the research (e.g. Carroll and Hall 1993: 12). I use unobtrusive methods to collect non-reactive data and so this problem does not undermine my data collection or data analysis. Furthermore, a large collection of primary source records created by independent authorities adequately record historical details about Australia’s GCP and these documents consistently report the same historical facts. Furthermore, it is rare for Defence commentators and historians to provide contradictory information about what military roles were to closed women at different points in time in Australia’s history. Because I am able to triangulate multiple sets of evidence, my data analysis is reliable. Other scholars who pursue the same research questions should validate my inferences if they use similar methods and evidence.
I purposefully review non-reactive data in such a way that I can identify to what degree, if any, that emotions and irrational arguments sway policy discussion. This analysis enables me to identify the underlying motives of those who defend the GCP. The influence emotions and flawed logic exert over the evidence is not a limitation of my data but is a reality I must confront. Some Defence commentators possess rigid attitudes towards the view of the role and place of women and men in the military institution and explicit statements that appear in the evidence support this viewpoint.

This thesis sometimes analyses “bureaucratic” statistical data (Gomm 2004: 146) and other secondary evidence such as internal Defence polls to draw inferences. In a small number of cases, these agencies only outline their methods in summary form. This means I cannot be sure the researcher adopts appropriate research techniques and methodologies such as obtaining data from a representative, unbiased sample (Gomm 2004: 139–149; e.g. Quinn 1989: 45). Reliance on secondary sources is legitimate where the researcher cannot access the working papers and raw data of research conducted by others (Clark and Maynard 1998: 58–59).

In the handful of cases where I rely on secondary data, such as surveys, I read the document in full to confirm that the surveyor adheres to standard research conventions based on the information provided. For example, I check whether the survey uses leading questions and I avoid analysing data that contains this flaw. Where a survey does not conform to sound methodological sampling techniques, I explicitly highlight this in my discussion and identify the specific limitations of the survey (Clark and Maynard 1998).
The only secondary data source I cannot interrogate for methodological flaws is the Frank Small & Associates Survey conducted in 1995. This survey is not available on the public record, as this firm no longer exists and its survey data and methodologies are not publicly available. I have cross-referenced secondary sources that cite this survey to confirm these sources present identical data. The Frank Small & Associates survey is not central to my analysis. I cite this survey briefly because Defence sources and academics refer to this data as the only independent poll that measures public support for the GCP (e.g. Smith and Coates 1995: NP).

I do not collect data via interviews (e.g. from female ADF personnel) as this method does not align with the bounds of my research questions which focuses on gendered power relations of core institutions of the Australian state. My analysis provides an independent account of the social, cultural, political and military factors to which political elites, military elites, the media and other elites/institutions appeal when they defend the GCP. Male elites currently or formerly employed in these institutions dominate policy discussions. Women who currently serve in the ADF and those who formerly served in the ADF rarely defend the GCP in the public domain. Of the handful of women who do, they are all current ADF or Department of Defence employees and their policy discussions centre on biology. Examples of these include documents authored by Campbell (2000), Dines (2003) and Goyne (2003).

My theoretical approach and methodological design is appropriate for a gender-based military study. This thesis focuses on the prestige and elevated status bestowed on the all-male combat fighter and I bring masculinities to the forefront of my analysis. This study does not adopt a feminist methodological design for two reasons. First, my
research does not aim to investigate women’s experiences of the GCP so it is not essential to conduct interviews with women who are currently employed by Australia’s armed forces or have prior service experience in this institution (e.g. Bridges 2005: 36). The second reason is that my research does not seek to capture the “voices” of women who are marginalised in the ADF. It is not my intention to captures the views ADF female possess concerning the GCP so that I can make their opinions prominent in the public arena (e.g. Bridges 2005: 42).

A plethora of primary data exists on the public record that quantifies female ADF personnel support levels in favour of upholding and overturning the GCP. This data captures the attitudes of women in Australia’s civilian society (e.g. Department of Veterans’ Affairs 2006: 100) and women serving in Australia’s armed forces (e.g. Quinn 1988: 64–65; Little 1991a; Hodson and Salter 1995). Burton (1996: 103) and Bridges (2005: 232–233) independently analyse thematic discussion data that records female attitudes towards the GCP. I also review scholarly articles authored by the small number of female ADF personnel who defend the state enforcing the GCP (e.g. Goyne 2003) and articles authored by female ADF personnel which do not support the GCP (e.g. Chapman 1999). In selected parts of this thesis, I refer to the opinions put forward by female ADF personnel where this evidence is relevant to my research questions.

This thesis does not pursue an in-depth comparative analysis of Australia’s GCP with another nation’s GCP due to the word limit imposed. A comparative study might provide enriching context to reveal what factors are unique about Australia’s GCP.
3.6 Conclusion

The historical descriptive content analysis method is the dominant tool I use to analyse the ADF’s GCP documents and other primary and secondary evidence, notably text and images. I use a social constructionist epistemology to analyse evidence, as the role and place of women in the armed forces is a social determinant and not a biological one. Chapters Four to Seven employ the methods and methodological tools I discuss in this Chapter.
Chapter Four  
Policy history and context

4.1  Introduction

This chapter aims to outline the historical context of the nine GCP documents that underpin data analysis. This historical analysis is important because the persistence of Australia’s GCP stubbornly defies the dismantling of the gendered ‘glass ceiling’ that has persisted throughout this nation’s most prominent and influential public institutions.

I first examine the various ways in which the state and its armed forces traditionally marginalise its female personnel in other ways beyond the enforcement of a GCP. I then draw on this historical context to outline the social and political background that drove the state to insert Section 43 into the *Sex Discrimination Bill* in 1983. I next explore the historical context that explains the partial reversal of Australia’s GCP that commenced during the mid 1990s. I develop this argument by placing this analysis in a broader context of domestic and global gender politics that transpire during this decade and beyond. Critics of Australia’s GCP reject the argument that the armed forces are a unique exceptional organisation and therefore cannot accommodate the services of female personnel in key frontline roles.

4.2  Australia’s gendered military history

To understand the how Australia’s GCP diminishes the status of Australia’s female defence personnel, it is important to review to contextualise the history of this policy against other policies that deny women the same rights on par with their male colleagues.
It is also important to identify the vast civil–military gap that persists, by identifying the many gains realised by Australia’s women in this nation’s civil society. Since 1984, the state has appointed women into many high public offices for the first time. This includes the appointment of Australia’s first Chief Minister of a state/territory government (Rosemary Follett in 1989), state governor (Roma Mitchell in 1991), Governor-General (Quentin Bryce in 2008) and Prime Minister (Julia Gillard in 2010) (Department of Social Services 2013).

Australia’s GCP is one regime of many that traditionally subordinates women to men in Australia’s armed forces. The GCP is the focus of this thesis, as it remains one of only two statutory exemptions that makes it lawful for the ADF to exclude women from participation on equal terms with menii.

Defence policy that discriminates against Australia’s women traditionally occurs in two principal ways. Defence policy diminishes female personnel’s service conditions by restricting women’s right to work in certain ADF employment categories such as Direct Combat. Furthermore, Defence policy may offer female military personnel lower pay and benefits than their male colleagues for equal work. Australia’s armed forces abolished this practice in 1979 in order to comply with Federal equal pay legislation and common law (ADF 1999; Bridges 2005: 21, 84–92).

Prior to January 2013, Australia’s armed forces had never appointed any women into a military fighting role whose primary function is to engage the enemy face-to-face, and this exclusion has applied during peacetime and wartime. Australia’s armed forces did not formally maintain a service-wide GCP prior to 1984. The exclusion of women from
various armed support roles and armed fighting roles had been actioned as Defence policy via various documents such as Federal Government Cabinet Minutes. Prior to 1978 most of these policy documents do not name specific military roles (e.g. Infantry) which remained closed to Australia’s female Defence personnel.

Historically the state took for granted that it could exclude women from the vast majority of military occupations and uphold a natural gendered division of labour in its armed forces. Prior to the 1980s the state and Australia’s Executive Defence bodies never justified in detail the reasons why Australia’s female Defence personnel were restricted to working in medical and administrative support duties. For example, a Department of Defence Memorandum dated 24 April 1974 clarifies the scope of the ADF’s former GCP as it stood in 1974. This document confirms Australia’s female Defence personnel remain restricted to serving in auxiliary military roles. This Memorandum is only four paragraphs long and comprises less than one page. This policy document merely summarises the occupations closed to female Defence personnel. This Memorandum also offers no detailed rationale to justify the restrictions it imposes on women’s service conditions. This document briefly states community support exists in favour of restricting women’s service to participation in auxiliary medical and clerical roles that support men, especially male combat personnel, and this justifies these restrictive employment practices. The paragraph of this policy document that articulates the bounds of Australia’s GCP states that female Defence personnel do not engage in “operational tasks”. It also mentions female Defence personnel may not work in “combat” duties.

The exclusion of women from most military roles was deeply naturalised in Australia’s armed forces prior to the enactment of the Sex Discrimination Act (Summers 2000) and
the scope of women’s employment opportunities did not increase dramatically in this institution until 1990 (ADF 1999: NP). Records stored at The National Archives of Australia confirm only a handful of men and women in Australia’s civilian society and military institutions wrote to Australia’s Defence Executive in Canberra during the 1970s to complain that Australia’s armed forces discriminates against its female personnel (National Archives of Australia 1978-1979).

Between 1901 and 1984, the status of Australia’s GCP barely changed (ADF 1999). During this period, the state regarded women as a reserve source of labour that it could recruit for specified military support roles that were supportive of male Defence personnel. This occurred during wartime, when the state was unable to appoint sufficient male military personnel to defend the nation domestically or support its military allies offshore.

Virtually all of Australia’s female Defence personnel were subordinate to Australia’s male military personnel prior to 1984 (Bridges 2005: 66–79). During the Boer War and First World War, women were restricted to working as military nursing sisters in Australia’s Land Army. All women appointed to the Nursing Corps held officer rank. However, this rank was only honorary. The most senior ranking female Nursing Officer was automatically subordinate to every man in the hierarchy of Australia’s armed forces (Espie 1998: 100). A declassified Australian Government archive dated 1917 confirms the Australian Government only planned to conscript “single men between ages 20 and 44 including widowers and divorcees without children” for compulsory military service during the First World War (Governor-General of Australia 1917: NP). This record clarifies the state’s desire to exclude women from all forms of frontline support roles at
this point in Australia’s history, with the exception of military nursing duties. This restriction placed on women’s service conditions was in line with civilian norms at the time. During the First World War period most of Australia’s women stayed at home permanently to care for the family home and their husbands’ children (Damousi 1992; Damousi and Lake 1992: 4–5).

Only during the Second World War was Australia’s GCP temporarily relaxed to allow women to work in a limited number of combat-support units in Australia’s armed forces. Australia’s female military personnel engaged as volunteers in all-female units in Australia’s Land Army, Air Corps and Naval Corps. The chronic shortage of domestic military personnel was the principle cause of this policy development. Defence policy allowed Australia’s female military personnel to handle, load and service ammunition machinery, but forbade them from firing live ammunition at the enemy (Thomas 1978: 3–4; Australian Army 1978a: 13). A handful of nursing sisters and administrative assistants served deep in the rear offshore in Lae, New Guinea during this war (MacLeod 1975: 4–5; Bridges 2005: 68). Australia’s Defence Executive did not deploy female military personnel offshore to work in a live warzone on the frontline during the Second World War (Australian Government Advisory War Council Minute 1944).

The title ‘Auxiliary’ was included in the prefix of Australia’s all-female Air, Land and Naval Military Corps that formed during the Second World War. For example, Australia’s all-female Air Corps was officially designated the ‘Women’s Auxiliary Australian Air Force’ (ADF and Ryebuck Media 2002: 4). By formally designating the Women’s Corps as ‘Auxiliary’, the state constructed women’s contribution to their nation’s Armed Forces as supportive of the Regular Corps, which was an all-male
Declassified Australian Government Cabinet documents from the Second World War period reveal the Australian Government viewed women as a reserve pool of military labour it could employ only as a last resort should Australia face the risk of invasion by Japan’s Imperial Military Forces (Australian Government Cabinet Minute 1943). A memo written by Australia’s Advisory War Council states “if the prescribed intake of 2,000 [all-male military recruits] into the [Armed] Services was to be obtained, the introduction of compulsory service of women will be necessary (Advisory War Council Minute 1944: NP).” Cross-national research that compares the history of women’s military participation over the past century reveals this version of Australia’s GCP conformed to an international pattern in which men invariably monopolised combat roles even during times of high national security threat. The dominant explanation for the near-universal exclusion of women from combat service is that frontline fighting roles remain socially constructed as the prerogative of the adult male population (Segal 1995; Segal et al. 2002).

Women’s military service conditions remained inferior to men’s employment conditions after the conclusion of the Second World War. Between 1951 and 1979, the state restricted Australia’s armed forces from recruiting more than 4% of female personnel into military support roles (Australian Government Cabinet Minute 1951; ADF 1999: NP). Prior to 1975, married women required their husbands’ written consent to serve in female auxiliary military units (Thomas 1978: 1). Australia’s armed forces automatically discharged all female military personnel once they were married until it rescinded this policy in 1969. Moreover, prior to 1974, pregnant female personnel were automatically discharged (Holden and Tanner 2001: 2). These personnel policies lagged behind gender equality developments that transpired in Australia’s civilian society by a number of

Declassified Australian Government Cabinet Papers provide specific details of how the state officially favoured hiring women only in nursing, medical and administrative roles prior to the 1970s. For example, when creating Australia’s compulsory all-male National Service Scheme in 1959, the Menzies Australian Government Cabinet states its policy of excluding women from frontline fighting roles is justifiable because “they [women] are better fitted than men to carrying out certain [military] duties (Australian Government Cabinet Minute 1959: 2).” Moreover, these “certain duties” specifically includes ‘non-combat’ functions such as medical and administrative support roles. This is evident when Australia’s Defence Cabinet states Australia’s military “women are required in the [armed] Services for nursing and to perform a variety of tasks thereby releasing men for service in combatant units (Australian Government Cabinet Minute 1959: 2).”

Defence policy documents such as the RODC Report Part A (Australian Army 1978a: 13) and internal Defence Memorandums (e.g. Fogarty 1974: 2) created in the 1970s report how Australia’s female military personnel were restricted to working in administrative and clerical roles in the Australian Army which were not classified as members of the ‘Profession of Arms’. Excluding women from this notion of the ‘Profession of Arms’ reveals further details of the diminished status of female personnel
throughout Australia’s armed forces. Major General (Australian Army) C. W. Orne of Australia’s Department of Defence reports that this concept, the ‘Profession of Arms’, is rooted in the core principles of “duty”, “risk” and the “demands [which] are reflected in the pay and allowances” of those who volunteer to join the ADF (Orne 2011: 23). The ADF internally creates this notion of the ‘Profession of Arms’ as a “self-regulating” principle (Orne 2011: 25). Orne’s discussion appears in a Defence policy report he prepared for Australia’s Department of Defence titled “Beyond Compliance: Professionalism, Trust and Capability in the Australian Profession of Arms. Reviews into Aspects of Defence and Australian Defence Force Culture” (Orne 2011: i).

United Nations human rights treaty law is an external institution that can shape domestic policy at the Federal Government level in Australia (Heyns and Viljoen 2001: 401, 496). For example, Australia has a legal obligation to comply with the United Nation’s Treaty titled *Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 111 (1958)* (United Nations 1958) which this nation ratified on 15 June 1973 (International Labour Organization 2008). This Convention outlaws most forms of negative discrimination against minorities, women and men in the work sector. Australia’s ratification of this Treaty was a dominant factor that caused the ADF to review the status of women in the Armed Services during the 1970s (e.g. Mahler 1974; Department of the Army 1974). This review did not cause Australia to alter its GCP or expand the role of women in its Armed Forces during the 1970s or 1980s (MacLeod 1975: ADF 1999: NP). The status of women in Australia’s Armed Services was on par with the treatment of women in other western and non-western nations during the 1970s (Thomas 1970s) and 1980s. This partly explains why Australia did not increase women’s participation rates or open armed roles to women in its Armed Forces during the 1970s (Smith 1990b: 126–131).
The United Nations did not request that Australia rescind its GCP during the 1980s and the decades prior. Australia’s GCP was consistent with international norms as no other nation allowed women into combat roles until 1984, when Norway’s legislature approved the integration of women into combat (e.g. Smith 1990b: 128–129). Canada was the second western nation to annul its GCP during the post-Second World War era. Canadian Forces gradually integrated female personnel into combat roles during the early 1990s (Winslow and Dunn 2002). An external push factor that occurred within Canada was the cause of this policy change. In 1989, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled that Canada’s GCP violated this nation’s Human Rights Act (1982). This judicial authority instructed Canada’s armed forces to annul its GCP, and this directive was effective immediately (Canadian Human Rights Tribunal 1989).

The Australian Government’s obligation to comply with international human rights treaty Law was an external factor that influenced the Hawke Government to draft the Sex Discrimination Bill (Charlesworth and Charlesworth 2004). The Australian Government ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) (CEDAW) on 17 July 1980. This ratification was subject to two reservations that remain current. The first reservation denies Australian women the right to claim paid maternity leave. The second reservation authorises the ADF to refuse to appoint women in any military roles where they are likely to engage the enemy face-to-face (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2000: NP). Both reservations implicitly relate to biological differences between gendered bodies. The maternity leave reservation highlights the unique reproductive capacities of the female gendered body (Charlesworth and Charlesworth 2004: NP). These two reservations are
noteworthy as they undermine the spirit of CEDAW, which seeks to outlaw all forms of negative discrimination against women (United Nations 1979; Charlesworth and Charlesworth 2004: NP).

The status and rights of women in the ADF did not automatically change after Australia ratified CEDAW and enacted Equal Opportunity Laws in its state/territory parliaments and Federal Parliament. For example, the Australian Army did not allow women to carry a rifle on the parade ground until 1988, and this restriction has never applied to male Army personnel (Grey 2001: 241). During the early 1990s, the United Nations began to challenge those governments that denied women equality of opportunity in their armed forces. During the 1990s, the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nation’s CEDAW Committee published a series of reports that expressly criticised those nations who enforced a GCP and argued these regimes violate CEDAW, as it is an unjustifiable form of negative discrimination against women (e.g. United Nations 1993; 1994; 1995; 1997).

The near-universal exclusion of women from at least some combat roles in all national military forces, largely explains why social groups and prominent public figures in Australia’s civilian community rarely challenged Australia to reverse its GCP prior to the 1990s (Buttsworth 2003: 16–25; Bridges 2005: 69–81). Since the late 1970’s, equal rights lobby groups publicly called for Australia’s Federal Parliament to enact anti sex discrimination laws on par with legislation enacted by the State Parliaments of New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria. By 1977, these States had enacted legislation that outlawed most forms of sex discrimination in the work sector and the commercial trade of goods and services (Segal et al. 2002: 777).
The drafting of the *Sex Discrimination Bill* in 1983 required the Australian Parliament to determine the exemptions it desired to incorporate into this Bill. Australia’s Defence Executive created its first service-wide GCP in 1984 (ADF 1986; Summers 2000). This policy created two nomenclatures – ‘combat’ and ‘combat-related’. These classifications defined those military roles that would remain closed to women at that point in time. This policy development was the result of majority bipartisan support for the GCP that prevailed in Australia’s Parliament. The executive leadership of Australia’s armed forces also supported this policy. Male personnel accounted for around 92.5% of the ADF’s headcount in 1984 (Smith and McAllister 1991: 373). Women were absent from the most senior roles within the ADF’s Executive and Australia’s Ministry of Defence (*e.g.* Summers 2000). Male elites dominated Australia’s civil–military affairs during the early 1980s as no female held any Executive post related to Defence in Australia’s Cabinet, and no woman sat on the executive bodies of the Ministry of Defence and the ADF Executive (*e.g.* Connell 1987: 15; Summers 2000).

In late 1983, the Australian Government delegated the task of determining the bounds of Australia’s GCP to the Department of Defence Executive. This agency appointed senior Defence personnel to work in collaboration with the Federal Office for Women (Australian Government) to draft Australia’s first service-wide GCP document. The Australian Government appointed Dr Anne Summers to Chair a Defence Panel in her capacity as the incumbent Director of the Office for Women (Australian Government). This Panel’s mandate was to define those military occupations which were to be exempt from the *Sex Discrimination Act*, as authorised by Section 43 of this Act (Summers 2000). In 2000, Dr Summers published a book chapter to offer her personal account of
the discussions and events that took place on this Committee. She reports the ADF did not appoint any female personnel to this Panel. Moreover, Summers (2000) informs her audience that she was not able to influence the definition of Australia’s GCP. The executive delegated to the Department of Defence the sole authority to decide which military occupations it would classify as Direct Combat and Combat-related. Those occupations that did not hold Direct Combat and Combat-related status overwhelmingly comprised administrative support duties. In 1984, women could apply to work only in these auxiliary occupations. The employment of female personnel in the ADF was restricted to roles that were supportive of men who held status as Direct Combat and Combat-related military professionals.

In 1984, the Department of Defence determined that women were eligible to apply to serve in 17,390 ‘other’ headcount positions. Those roles that remained open to women were those occupations that were least likely to engage the enemy face-to-face during wartime (ADF 1986). This accounted for only 23.5% of the ADF’s established headcount of approximately 74,000 full-time equivalent personnel (Anderson 1997: NP; ADF 1999: NP). This was in fact a significant change, and increased the number of positions open to women by around threefold in 1984 (Summers 2000: 239). However, during 1984 the ADF closed some occupations that were previously open to women, and classified these occupations as armed fighting roles (Summers 2000).

The response of Australia’s Defence Executive to the enactment of *Sex Discrimination Act* is suggestive of a viewpoint that believes the vast majority of roles in the ADF should remain the natural preserve of men. Australia’s Defence Executive chose to exclude women from engaging in multiple work categories where armed fighting is a
secondary objective, which refers to military duties generally known as combat-related (Summers 2000) even though the ADF experienced chronic recruitment and retention problems across the tri-services throughout the 1980s (Downes 1988; Hamilton 1988: 17). Summers (2000: 239) reports that Australia’s Defence Executive chose to define the term ‘combat-related’ to include all military support roles where a person might be exposed to danger from long-range weapons such as artillery and missile fire. Department of Defence Executives who sat on this panel were all-male personnel with combat status. These men vigorously argued that the ADF must exclude women from working as catering personnel and this panel classified these occupations as combat-related. This policy surprised Dr Summers as Australia’s women have dominated these roles in Australia’s civilian work sector and the family home. The ADF’s classification of ‘combat-related’ military duties caused the ADF to cease hiring female cooks, medical personnel, logistics support personnel and other administrative positions where Defence personnel might be exposed to enemy fire, even from a vast distance during warfare (Summers 2000). Women had worked in most of these roles in Australia’s armed forces, albeit in small numbers, within close proximity to combat units since the mid-1970s (Committee of Reference for Defence Force Pay 1977; Australian Army 1978a).

Between 1984 and 2000, the Australian Government also excluded female Defence personnel from working in all employment categories formerly designated as ‘combat-related’ (ADF 1986). This policy was lawful, as the now repealed Section 43 (1) (b) of the Sex Discrimination Act permitted Australia’s military institution discretion to exclude women from working in these roles if it chose to enforce this version of its GCP (Attorney General’s Department 1984a: NP).
4.3 Sociological policy context

The ADF’s GCP documents are attitude markers of gendered social issues that prevail in Australia’s civilian society and military institution around the time of publication. These documents provide evidence that the ADF responds to contemporary social developments that transpire outside of Australia’s military institution. The creation of Australia’s first service-wide GCP document in 1984, as outlined in policy document titled DI (G) PERS 32-1: Employment of Women in the Australian Defence Force (hereafter DI-(G) PERS 32-1), reflected the gendered division of labour and power that prevailed in Australia’s civilian society at that point in time. Allowing women to fight in military combat roles threatened to destabilise the patriarchal society whereby Australia’s women were naturally subordinate to men in their nation’s civilian and military work sectors (Summers 2000). The enactment of the *Sex Discrimination Bill* promised to alter the *status quo* of gender relations in Australia’s public sphere. This is evident from how the incumbent Federal Labor Government appointed a Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner in 1984. The Hawke Australian Government empowered this Commissioner, Pamela O’Neil with the authority to instigate legal action against individuals and institutions that unlawfully discriminate against women and men in the public sphere (Charlesworth 2006: NP).

The status of gender relations in the public sphere and private sphere emerged as a divisive cultural and political issue in Australia during the 1970s. The rapid growth of the Second Wave Feminist Movement in Australia and other western nations during this decade is a strong factor that explains this historical development. For example, the public release of Germaine Greer’s book *The Female Eunuch* (Greer 1970) attracted
much political debate about the dominance of patriarchy and the oppression and structural subordination of women in Australia’s mainstream media during the early 1970s. Greer’s book was also widely discussed in Australia’s households and universities during this decade (McGrath 1999).

Gender relations had become a more divisive issue in Australia’s civilian society more than a decade after Greer (1970) authored *The Female Eunuch*. During the early 1980s, many of Australia’s Federal Parliamentarians openly supported principles of gender equality. Other parliamentarians believed it was desirable to preserve fixed gender roles that subordinated women to men in the public and private spheres (Ryan 2004; Summers 2000: 238; Senator Martin in Parliament of Australia 1983: 3, 630. 4, 010).

The lengthy, delayed passage of the *Sex Discrimination Bill* in both Houses of Australia’s Parliament is evidence of the intense controversy this Bill attracted within the Parliament (Sawer 2004: 12). Crossbench parliamentarians claimed many of their constituents resented the enactment of the *Sex Discrimination Bill* (Sawer 2004: 9–10). Many Australians feared enacting this Bill would radically alter the social fabric that shaped Australia’s religious values and way of life. Most detractors of the *Sex Discrimination Bill* supported the need to preserve fixed gender roles in Australia’s public and private sphere as they believed the *status quo* of Australia’s gender relations underpinned the wellbeing and prosperity of their nation (Sawer 2004: 9–10, 13–14; Ronalds 2007: NP). For example, traditionally men are naturalised as the leader of the hetero-normative nuclear family home and women support men as homemakers and mothers. Social structures that imagine men and women as suited to fixed roles have gradually eroded after the state created the *Sex Discrimination Bill* in 1983. For example,
an ever-increasing percentage of Australian women are delaying marriage and childbirth so they may pursue a long-term career in the work sector and this is linked to declining fertility rates (e.g. Probert 2010: 15). In 1972, fertility rates in Australia were around 2.7 per woman. In 2014, these rates were lower, at around 1.9 per woman (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013; The Treasury 2014: NP).

During 1983 and 1984, crossbench parliamentarians expressed concerns similar to those stated by Government MP Mick Young in the Lower House of Parliament. He argued that enacting the *Sex Discrimination Bill* threatened to “interfere with religious or family values” (Mick Young MP in Parliament of Australia 1984: 69). Senator Peter Durack claimed that enacting this Bill aimed to change female’s societal “role as wife and mother” and force women to become employees in the work sector (Senator Durack in Parliament of Australia 1983: 1,920). These parliamentarians informed the Parliament many of their constituents feared that enacting this Bill would promote the creation of public policies that penalised women who did not enter or remain in the workforce (e.g. Senator Brian Harradine in Parliament of Australia 1983: 1,933). Senator Durack (1983) stated these perceptions were deeply concerning as a “large number of women in the community … wish to remain in that [wife and mother] role. (Durack in Parliament of Australia 1983: 1,920)”

The Hawke Government argued that the enactment of the *Sex Discrimination Bill* would promote equal gender rights and equality of opportunity for men and women in Australia’s public sphere (Mick Young in Parliament of Australia 1983: 66–69). When introducing this Bill to the Australian Parliament, Mick Young MP informs the Lower House that the Hawke Labor Government believes discrimination against women is more
problematic than discrimination against men, even though the *Sex Discrimination Bill* overwhelmingly uses text that is gender neutral:

> I am pleased to be able to move the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Bill which the Government regards as a significant piece of legislation reform and an important element in the Government’s overall interest in improving the status of women and securing a more just and equitable Australian society (Mick Young, Special Minister of State in Parliament of Australia 1983: 66).

Liberal rights feminists supported the right of Australia’s women to realise equal opportunity in all public institutions (Sawer 2004: 9–10), including their nation’s Armed Forces. This position clashed with the majority of Australia’s Federal parliamentarians who supported the traditional sexual division of labour and power in the military institution, especially within Defence roles whose primary purpose is to maim or kill the enemy face-to-face during wartime (Summers 2000; *e.g.* Tate in Parliament of Australia 1983: 1,925–1,926).

Supporters of Section 43 (1) of the *Sex Discrimination Act* sought to preserve traditional gendered roles that existed in Australia’s military institution. For example, Senator Michael Tate supported the insertion of this clause because he believed that opening fighting roles to female personnel would result in women applying for frontline roles primarily because of “economic forces”. He did not believe that Australia’s women would apply to engage in armed frontline military roles because they desired to engage the enemy face-to-face during wartime (Tate in Parliament of Australia 1983: 1,924).
Tate (in Parliament of Australia 1983: 1,924) also argued that the nature of the militarised society would pressure women to seek entry into armed fighting roles when they would prefer to pursue a career outside of Australia’s armed forces:

We must not close our eyes to the fact that many women, if combat related duties were open to them, would find themselves in that situation not from real choice but because that particular militarisation of their lives would be the only option open to them.

This parliamentary speech by Senator Tate is typical of the way crossbench Members of Australia’s Parliament felt obliged to justify the exemptions included in the Sex Discrimination Bill, such as the inclusion of Section 43. Hansard records dated 1983 and 1984 are evidence of a shift in the policy processes of the state. Prior to 1984, the state rarely justified existing laws that upheld patriarchal structures and regulated the female gendered body, and the community at large rarely challenged these interventions. In recent decades, a growing number of feminists and other organised women’s groups have challenged Australia’s Parliament to justify laws and government policies that discriminate against Australia’s women. Moreover, the patriarchal character of the state gradually erodes as women occupy an ever-growing percentage of senior leadership roles within Australia’s public institutions (e.g. Chappell 2002: 28–29; 102–105).

The sexual division of labour and power existed to some degree in virtually all nations’ Armed Forces when the Labor Government drafted the Sex Discrimination Bill in 1983. This social structure in the military is patriarchal as it subordinates women to men in this organisation (Enloe 1980). The integration of women into armed fighting roles during the early 1980s would have defied universal social norms that impose restrictions on women’s military service. The warrior exists as a male construction in virtually all civilization’s martial images and narratives throughout the course of recorded history.
(Tuten 1982: 237). In 1984, the majority of Australia’s Federal parliamentarians supported the creation of an exemption clause that would allow the ADF to enforce a service-wide GCP (Summers 2000: 238). Hansard records confirm the major political parties supported the enforcement of a sexual division of labour in the frontline ranks of Australia’s military institution. Section 43 of the *Sex Discrimination Bill* attracted bipartisan support among the major political parties (Ronalds 2007: NP; e.g. Teague in Parliament of Australia 1983: 2, 958). The inclusion of Section 43 was essential for this Bill to pass parliament, as most members of this body accepted the argument that Australia’s armed forces play a unique role as the arch manager of violence and protector of Australia’s sovereignty.

As defender of the nation, Australia’s military institution serves a unique function (Pettman 1996: 16–17). This exceptional purpose partially explains why Section 43 is the only clause contained in the *Sex Discrimination Act* that makes it lawful for a public institution to refuse to hire in specific occupations. To understand the reasons why Australia’s GCP exists and persists, with the authority of a special legislative exemption, scholars must understand how the state, national identity and the narrative of nationhood are fundamentally rooted in ideas about masculinity and patriarchy. This institution also requires strong and fit personnel who can engage the male enemy face to face on the battlefield and the shift in public debate in recent decades focuses on this theme.

The inferior performance of the average female martial body and mind is also the dominant theme that recurs in the ADF’s GCP documents. These discussions centre on biology and sometimes cite bioscience data that quantifies differences between the
average biophysical performances of the male and female martial body (e.g. Burton 1996: Chapter 5; Dunn 1998: 13; Campbell 2000: 11, 20–21; Holden and Tanner 2001: 17–20). These references to bioscience appear in all Reports listed in Table Two, with the exception of policy document DI-(G) PERS 32-1. Discussions that focus on the performance of the gendered body are more prominent and detailed in the Reports published after 1987 and they carry more weight as factors that justify enforcing the GCP. This shift in detail and emphases placed on bioscience themes first occurs in The Burton Report and become more central to policy discussion in The Ferguson Report and The Campbell Report.

The four GCP documents published prior to The Burton Report (see Table Two) do not centre on the diminished capacities of the female martial body to justify the restrictions imposed on women’s military service in Australia (Australian Army 1978a; 1978b) and TTCP member nations (Thomas 1978; Quinn and Toulson 1987). For example, The RODC Part A Report confidently states its discussion of the performances of the gendered martial body “offers no startling new analysis of female physiology and psychology” and informs its audience “the current consensus contained in the literature will be referred to” (Australian Army 1978a: 30).

The Burton Report examines the “cultural, social and institutional barriers which impede the competitiveness” of women’s careers in the ADF (Burton 1996: xiii). Burton’s study pursues 13 objectives. Burton’s fourth objective examines how the “role of combat/operational requirements” impedes women’s career progression in the ADF (Burton 1996: xiii). The essence of The Burton Report explains how and why the ADF’s
policies, management and rank-and-file male personnel continue to maltreat female ADF personnel and favour men when choosing whom to hire, train and promote. This Report argues that a culture of male privilege and male prerogative dominate the ADF’s organisational culture. Burton draws this conclusion from qualitative data she extracted from male and female ADF personnel during the mid-1990s. She also reviews other primary source data such as Defence Regulations and Defence Policy (Burton 1996: Executive Summary pp. 1–25).

Burton’s study does not provide a focused civil–military relations policy account of the history of the ADF’s GCP. Her limited and fragmented discussion of the history of the GCP never exceeds a few sentences in any section of her 215-page report (Burton 1996: 1–215). Furthermore, Burton’s 33-page Executive Summary lists only one bullet-point that explicitly refers to “direct combat roles” (Burton 1996: ES–18). In this part of her Summary, she mentions how the ADF continues to exclude female personnel from “direct combat roles” and concludes that women’s inability to accrue “direct combat experience” limits their ability to achieve the experience required for promotion into the ADF’s leadership ranks.

The Holden and Tanner Report reviews the history and current status of Australia’s GCP across two paragraphs on page V and page 3 of this document (Holden and Tanner 2001: v, 3). The scope of this Report considers all aspects of women’s service conditions in the ADF and the national Armed Forces of New Zealand, Canada, Britain and the United States. Discussions in this Report centre on issues that reduce women’s recruitment and retention rates across all job categories. Holden and Tanner (2001: Executive Summary)
conclude that multiple factors undermine the appointment and advancement of women in member nations’ military institutions. Examples of these issues include the uncomfortable design of women’s uniforms and the culture of sexual harassment that prevails in these nations’ Armed Forces (Holden and Tanner 2001: 7–41). The Holden and Tanner Report states that biophysical competency is the dominant issue that justifies the need to exclude women from combat roles in the ADF and the armed forces of other TTCP members, excluding Canada, when this policy document was published in 2001 (Holden and Tanner 2001: 3, 39).

The Ferguson Report and The Campbell Report are distinguishable from the other GCP documents. These are the only policy documents whose terms-of-reference focus on the exclusion of women from combat service in the Australian Army, The RAN and The RAAF. The Ferguson Report and The Campbell Report show how the ADF Executive has shifted its focus to criteria that relate to human biology to justify enforcing the GCP. The Ferguson Report centres on the inferior performances of the average female martial body (e.g. Dunn 1998: 3). The Campbell Report focuses on the lesser performances of the so-called ‘average’ and ‘typical’ psychological profile of female military personnel (e.g. Campbell 2000: 17–21).

4.4 Gradual dismantling of the GCP

Between 1990 and 2000, the Australian Government incrementally opened various combat-related roles to women in the RAN and the RAAF (ADF 1999: NP; Scott 2000). This policy change saw the ratio of men to women employed in the ADF decrease from
7.9: 1 to 6.3: 1 between 1990 and 2000 (Smith 1990b: 131; Ong and Kristian 2001: 9). Table Five shows how women’s participation rates in the ADF gradually increased between 1978 and 2012, from 4.9% to 13.8%. On 16 December 1995, the Australian Parliament formally repealed Section 43 (1) (b) of the Sex Discrimination Act. This change to Australia’s GCP was a compromise gesture to appease the United Nation’s CEDAW Committee. This Committee published reports that criticised Australia and stated Section 43 (1) (a) and Section 43 (1) (b) of the Sex Discrimination Act violated the spirit and intentions of CEDAW (Department of Prime Minster and Cabinet Office of the Status of Women 2000: NP).

Table Five

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Total ADF %</th>
<th>Australian Army %</th>
<th>Total work roles open to women %</th>
<th>Total headcount open to women %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data references are listed in endnote oneiii.

Table Five shows how women’s participation rates have traditionally been lower than men’s in the Australian Army when compared the ADF’s service-wide average, after the Sex Discrimination Act was enacted. This gap is largely explained by how Australia’s Land Army has perpetually excluded women from more total headcount positions than
the combined number of headcount positions closed to women in Australia’s Air Corps and Naval Corps (*e.g.* Smith 1999: 161–162). Women who are not currently employed within the ADF are excluded from working in around 12,500 headcount positions in this institution, of which around 12,000 of these are located in the Australian Army (ADF 2012: 20–21; ADF 2013: NP).

The Rudd-Gillard Labor Government was the first administration to claim sole responsibility for the status of Australia’s GCP in the public domain. In 2009, Defence Minister Stephen Smith and the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel Greg Combet issued a series of media communiqués that inform the public that their Government plans to dismantle the ADF’s GCP. In the same year, Australia’s Defence Minister Stephen Smith instructed the ADF Executive to review its biophysical entry standards for admission into Direct Combat roles and revise these criteria is appropriate. The objective of this instruction was to prepare the ADF to implement gender-neutral physical entry standards for combat roles at some unspecific date in the future (*e.g.* Defence Science Technology Organisation 2009). On 27 September 2011, Australia’s Defence Minister Stephen Smith announced to local media the ADF must transition towards gender-neutral combat admission standards for all applicants from the civilian community by *circa* 2016 (Smith and Snowdon 2011). On 11 October 2011, Defence Science and Personnel Minister Warren Snowdon informed the public that women presently serving in the ADF could apply for admission into all eight work categories classified as ‘Direct Combat’ roles as of 1 January 2013 if they can satisfy the same entry criteria currently required of male applicants (Snowdon 2012; Yopp *et al.* 2012: 4).
The Gillard Government explicitly linked its plan to annul the GCP to its desire to promote full gender equality in Australia’s armed forces. This is evident when Australia’s Prime Minister informs the public that she believes “Men and women should have an equal right to fight and die for their country”. The purpose of Gillard’s media statement informs the Australian public that her government supports Australia’s Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission conducting a public review into the status of women in the Australian Defence Force (Gillard in Wilson and Dodd 2011: NP). Gillard’s administration partially attributed the broader culture of misogyny, sexual harassment and male privilege that stubbornly persists in the ADF, including the ADFA, to the mandatory exclusion of women from combat service (Smith 2011). This is the most recent policy announcement to occur over the past decade concerning Australia’s GCP (ADF 2012: 277; Yopp et al. 2012: 4).

Australia’s GCP technically remains in force, as no public statement from the ADF or the Australian Government exists that refers to when women from Australia’s civilian society may join the ADF as roles that hold Direct Combat status. For example, at 10 August 2015, the ADF’s Recruitment Centre contains a brief statement that offers no detail about when women from Australia’s civilian society may join combat. This Centre’s sub-webpage that discusses Women in Defence contains one brief statement:

What kinds of jobs are available to women?

With the exception of a handful of combat and security roles, all ADF jobs are accessible to women such as Combat Systems Operator, Surveillance Aircraft Operator and Fast Jet Pilot. (ADF 2015b: NP).

In April 2013, the ABC reported “fewer than 20” female ADF personnel had transferred from non-combat roles into combat classified roles (ABC 2013a). This statistic is partial
evidence that the reversal of Australia’s GCP on 1 January 2013 did not automatically dilute the visible gendered division of labour in the ADF’s combat ranks. Female combat personnel accounted for less than 1% of total combat personnel during April 2013 (ADF 2013: 276).

4.5 Contemporary political environment

During the new millennium, a growing number of feminist scholars, elites and other public figures vigorously challenge the legitimacy of Australia’s GCP and these arguments routinely appear in public domains such as the mainstream print media (e.g. Spurling 2007) and Australia’s radio and television programs (e.g. Cox in Murray 2009). The dominant theme that recurs in these forums is that the GCP is an unjustifiable negative form of discrimination that favours men and marginalises women in the military institution. This criticism comes from individuals not associated with academic institutions. For example, leaders of Australia’s minor Federal political parties such as Natasha Stott-Despoja and Andrew Bartlett from the Australian Democrats have appeared on ABC Radio to condemn the ADF’s GCP (e.g. Stott-Despoja and Bartlett in ABC 2005a). Many opponents of the GCP argue that the ADF is one of the most male-dominated public institutions in Australia. They also contend that the persistence of the ADF’s GCP is strong evidence the organisational culture of Australia’s military institution actively imposes barriers to resist the advancement of its female Defence personnel (e.g. Summers 2000; Goward 2001; Wadham 2004).
The dominant character of public debate has shifted from the ‘traditional gender roles’ divisive debate that dominated parliamentary debates during 1983 and 1984. The so-called rights versus readiness divide has featured most prominently in public debates since the early 1990s (e.g. Wrigley 1990: 208; Thornton 1990: 140; Smith 1995: 540–541; Davison 2007: 60). The successful integration of women into armed support roles in 1990 partially explains the timing of this shift. The appointment of into these occupations is partial evidence the state and Australia’s community support the expansion of women’s participation in their military institution, as this development did not attract mainstream controversy among parliamentarians and the civilian populace during the 1990s (e.g. Smith 1999: 162). Opponents of the GCP have barely changed their position that Australia’s women have an equal citizenship right to compete with men for all roles in the public sphere. However, defenders of this policy have shifted their focus to the need to maximise the ADF’s “operational effectiveness” (e.g. Davison 2007: 63). The ADF’s GCP document, DI-(G) PERS 32-1 justifies the need to uphold the GCP by arguing this regime seeks to offer female Defence personnel “equality of opportunity consistent with [preserving the ADF’s] operational effectiveness [my emphasis] (ADF 1994: 1).” This policy document does not define the term “operational effectiveness” (ADF 1994). This Defence Instruction merely lists those eight Direct Combat roles that remain closed to women. This document also states that statutory exemptions in the Sex Discrimination Act make it lawful for the ADF to refuse to hire women as combatants but offers no policy analysis to explain why it enforces a GCP.

Australia’s Defence Executive continues to refer to unspecified ‘operational’ issues to justify its support for the GCP. For example, in 2008, the Department of Defence wrote a submission to the Australian Senate’s Parliamentary Review titled “Inquiry into the
Effectiveness of the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act in Eliminating Discrimination and Promoting Gender Equity” (Parliament of Australia 2008). This submission argues that the Australian Parliament must not annul Section 43 of the Sex Discrimination Act because this exemption enables the ADF to maximise its “operational and capability requirements” (Department of Defence 2008: NP). In this document, the Department of Defence does not define the term “operational and capability requirements”.

In recent decades, Australia’s GCP has evolved into a divisive political issue within Australia’s civilian society as awareness and support for gender equality grows (Davison 2007: 60). Prior to 1990, relatively few Australians questioned the legitimacy of the GCP in the public domain (e.g. Thornton 1990: 140). Prior to the late 1980s, Australia’s mainstream print media rarely published articles that challenge the all-male construction of Australia’s warrior archetypes (e.g. Buttsworth 2003: 7, 48, 141–142). Criticism of the GCP appears in the public domain on rare occasions and only in narrow contexts such as scholarly publications. For example, Wing Commander (RAAF) M. J. Cassidy responds to the creation of Section 43 of the Sex Discrimination Bill and publishes his personal opinion in the Journal of the Royal United Services Institute of Australia. Cassidy (1983: 27) argues the drafting of Australia’s service-wide GCP in 1983 reflects the lack of political will in Australia’s Parliament to promote full gender equality in Australia’s armed forces. He attributes this ambivalence among lawmakers to the lack of empirical data that measures the performances of female combat personnel during warfare.

Public documents such as media transcripts show how Australia’s Defence leadership and the Executive have repeatedly accused the other party of enforcing Australia’s GCP.
Neither party wishes Australia’s society to view them as a strong supporter of a regime that explicitly discriminates against women. This political context largely explains why Defence and Government leaders have historically denied ownership of the GCP (e.g. Smith 1990b: 139; Smith 1999: 162).

Neither Australia’s military leaders nor the major political parties want to own Australia’s GCP. Commenting on the core recommendation outlined in The Ferguson Report, Major General (Australian Army) P.J. Dunn, who is the sponsor of this Defence policy document, informs the public that the ADF’s leadership expresses deep reservations about women engaging in two roles classified as Direct Combat, Infantry and Armour. The Ferguson Report explores the operational reasons that justify the enforcement of Australia’s GCP. Defence personnel who work in Infantry and Armour roles are most likely to engage the enemy face-to-face during warfare. Dunn’s press statement appears in the Herald Sun in 1998, and he informs the public that the state must officially approve any changes to the ADF’s GCP. This is evident when Dunn asks a question about community support for the GCP and defers the decision to alter or preserve the GCP to the Australian Government: “Does Australia want to see women in that [combat] role? That is a decision for government (P. J Dunn, Head Defence Personnel Executive, in McPhedran 1998a: 4).”

On 20 September 2002, Australia’s Prime Minister John Howard claimed the ADF’s personnel and leadership exert significant influence over the state’s decision to enforce the GCP. Howard made this statement on ABC Radio in a forum assembled to establish the reasons why Australia continues to enforce a GCP. Two of Australia’s most senior
Federal Government Ministers – Robert Hill (Defence Minister) and John Howard appeared on this Panel (ABC 2002). It is evident Howard was reluctant for his Government to claim ownership of the GCP when he states:

The remaining *front line* [my emphasis] is something that needs to be talked through and in the end *I will be guided by what the military troops think* [my emphasis] (John Howard, Prime Minister of Australia in ABC 2002: NP).

In reply to Howard’s statement, cited above, program host and moderator Alexandra Kirk astutely acknowledges how Defence leaders and Government Ministers state the other party is the chief supporter of the GCP. It is evident Kirk draws this conclusion when she states “While Mr Howard is deferring to the military, the military is deferring to the politicians saying the ultimate decision rests with parliamentarians (Kirk in ABC 2002: NP).” This contradiction and ambiguity among Defence leaders and Government Ministers on this panel causes Kirk to conclude the GCP is “a political hot potato that everyone keeps passing on (Kirk in ABC 2002: NP).” She surmises the enforcement of the GCP is a divisive topic because this regime discriminates against women. Former Prime Minister Howard and the ADF’s leadership each accused the other party of being the principal supporter of the GCP because it is no longer socially acceptable to support policies that blatantly favour men to the detriment of women (Kirk in ABC 2002: NP).

### 4.6 Conclusion

The history of Australia’s GCP is interesting, as this unique exemption in the *Sex Discrimination Act* highlights this nation’s enduring civil–military gap. This statutory exemption and policy is not as unique as it may appear to the casual observer. The GCP is an exemplar of the ways in which women remain subordinate to men in the family home and work sector. The statistics I examine in this chapter quantify the gap that exists
between male and female participation in Australia’s civilian society and military institution. This gap continues to narrow, as evident from the way in which the state has virtually abolished the GCP.

In the following Chapter, I explore how the ‘gender and nation’ literature enables me to decipher the latent and manifest messages that persist in the evidence. References to gendered cultural archetypes such as the warrior dominate my data analysis. Those who support the ADF’s GCP frequently cite nationalistic themes that refer to the gendered character of Australia’s war narratives and war images and these discussions feature prominently in print media articles. I draw on the gender and media (Krippendorf 2004: 74) theory outlined in this Chapter to analyse this data.
Chapter Five Gender, nation, state

Gender, combat and war have always been inextricably linked. If war stories have dominated the construction of histories and national identities, then the gendered roles these stories assign must be examined and pulled apart if the narrative is ever to be satisfactorily analysed (Buttsworth 2003: 1).

5.1 Introduction

The persistence of the ADF’s GCP anchors deeper issues about gender roles and state power in Australia’s national project. In this chapter, I explore how military, political and other elites repeatedly defend the need to preserve the patriarchal character of Australia’s national project to justify their support for the GCP. I also consider how and why these individuals repeatedly highlight the fact that militarism and warfare are naturalised as masculine constructs. These elites also support entrenched gender structures that prevail in Australia’s civilian work sector and the family home. These national institutions are patriarchal as men dominate leadership roles in these two domains. The subordination of women to men in the economy and household elevate the cultural power men enjoy in Australia’s national project. Those who defend the GCP within this framework purposefully seek to replicate the elite masculine character of Australian nationalism beyond Australia’s military institution.

I also examine how and why these elites defend the need to preserve and replicate the traditional fixed binary of gender roles that define Australia’s martial images and martial narratives. I discuss the unique role Australia’s mainstream print media plays in upholding the pre-existing patriarchal character of Australia’s martial images and martial narratives. The prime way the media supports the masculine character of these institutions is by replicating cultural images that portray Australia’s men in action-maker
roles such as warriors. The media simultaneously promotes images that represent women as naturally suited to subordinate roles such as pacifists.

These nationalist policy discussions draw implicitly and explicitly on socialised gender norms that remain entrenched in Australia’s civilian society and military institution. References to cultural binaries convey “latent meanings” (Neuendorf 2002: 6). Supporters of the GCP communicate a hidden message that seeks to uphold traditional binaries that fix gender roles in the national project. I reveal this agenda in the evidence I examine using descriptive qualitative content analysis techniques. This data includes the ADF’s GCP documents and other public documents such as speeches, media articles and academic articles authored by military personnel who have served as combat staff in Australia’s armed forces. Men who hold senior leadership roles in Australia’s Executive and the ADF dominate these policy discussions. Male elites invariably define the character of nationalism and they normally determine the nature and degree of a group’s inclusion in the national project (Mayer 2000: 17).

Section 5.2 provides context and offers a historical discussion that examines how and why Australia’s Defence Executive and other elites consistently defend the need to preserve the all-male character of the ADF’s traditions and internal culture. The common agenda that recurs throughout the evidence is a desire to preserve the masculine character of a martial culture that elevates men and subordinates women in Australia’s national project.

Section 5.3 explores how and why elites and others who support Australia’s GCP seek to preserve the sexual division of labour and power that exists in the civilian domain, in
particular within the family home and the work sector. This binary of fixed gender roles elevates men and subordinates women in Australia’s national project. This construction imagines men as natural leaders and portrays women as supporters of men. The nation’s men are portrayed as the natural ‘breadwinner’ of the family household and women stay at home to perform domestic duties and raise their male partner’s children.

Section 5.4 discusses fixed gender role binaries that define Australia’s martial images and martial narratives. Supporters of the GCP argue the state must preserve the traditional sexual division of labour and power that imagines the nation’s men as warriors who are ‘takers’ of human life. These elites defend the way women are naturalised in passive roles such as the so-called ‘beautiful soul’ archetype.

5.2 Nationalism context

Some defenders of the GCP argue that preserving the social construction of these fixed gender role binaries elevates women’s citizenship status. This viewpoint is a counter-argument to the opposing viewpoint that men enjoy elevated citizenship status bestowed on them as the nation’s fighters. This counter-argument is false. Australia’s cultural images of war portray men as natural leaders and heroic warriors and so men enjoy a privileged status in Australia’s national project (Pettman 1996: 16–17).

The argument that Australian women should not perform combat is the dominant theme that recurs in the evidence I explore in this chapter. Those who defend the GCP by referring to Australia’s nationalism support the patriarchal character of this nation’s institutions. Supporters of the GCP who pose nationalism arguments to defend their
argument rarely contextualise their discussion of military culture with the viewpoint that women cannot perform combat. Those who cite nationalism themes overwhelmingly ignore or marginalise bioscience debates that centre on the idea the female body is unsuitable for combat service. This notion that women should not perform combat gradually loses favour in Australia’s GCP documents and among elites and others who defend the GCP in the public domain. This policy shift is largely attributable to advances realised by Australia’s gender-equality movement that challenge the replication of fixed gender roles that subordinate women to men in the home, economy and military institution.

References to the ADF’s military ‘traditions’ are popular in the ADF’s GCP documents and other evidence that I examine in this section. ADF personnel with combat service dominate these discussions that centre on the ADF’s traditions. These men persistently argue that the masculine character of the ADF’s combat corps will stubbornly resist the integration of women into combat, even if the state reverses the GCP. For this reason, they argue that the state must preserve this regime and it has a legitimate operational need to do so.

The sub-themes of tradition that recur most frequently in the policy documents concern the need to preserve fixed gendered binary roles that are dominant in the family home and the armed forces. This notably includes the sexual division of paid labour (work) and unpaid work, such as the role of women as mothers (home). Defenders of the GCP persistently argue that these traditional roles define the social fabric of these societies. Furthermore, they argue that the majority of women and men support the need to maintain the sexual division of labour in these spheres of society. This focus on the need
to preserve the masculine exclusive traditions of combat service explains why these debates bypass the issue of whether females have the ability to perform combat service. Supporters of Australia’s GCP use explicit language similar to Lieutenant Colonel (Australian Army, Artillery Corps) M. L. Phelps. Phelps (1997: 39) argues that male ADF personnel reject female personnel integrating into all military roles, including combat roles, because they fiercely defend the way the Australian warrior archetype is socially constructed as an all-male tradition within their nation’s armed forces. This male officer argues the ADF cannot partially feminise the heterosexual male-centric ethos of Australia’s Land Army in the short term:

The combined effect of the changing status of women [my emphasis] and homosexuals in the Army and the reinforcement of the combat ethos, is to alter the combat masculine warrior [my emphasis] basic assumption to simplify that of the male warrior [my emphasis]. Army will remain a heterosexual male dominate profession in the foreseeable future [my emphasis] (Phelps 1997: 39).

Phelps’s article appears in the Australian Defence Force Journal after the public release of The Burton Report. The arguments Phelps and other likeminded male ADF combat personnel pose about the ADF’s traditions are consistent with the statements that appear in the ADF’s GCP documents.

**Policy documents**

The ADF’s GCP documents repeatedly argue that it is imperative for the state to preserve the masculine character of military traditions within Australia’s military institution. Furthermore, they cite this necessity to justify the way in that the state excludes women from engaging in frontline military service.
Discussion in this section and Section 5.3 shows how these references to ‘tradition’ frequently contextualise fixed gender roles that prevail in Australia’s military institution (e.g. the all-male warrior) to gender role binaries that are dominant in Australia’s civilian society.

Proponents of the GCP seek to replicate the patriarchal character of key institutions beyond the military institution, by defending deeply entrenched gender norms that exist in Australia’s civilian society and military institution. Supporters of this regime imagine men as the nation’s husbands, who is the ‘breadwinner’ of the hetero-normative nuclear family. Furthermore, they highlight pre-existing cultural norms that portray Australia’s women as wives, homemakers and mothers. Such statements aim to remind their audience that the image of a female combat fighter does not exist in the nation’s imagination.

Table Six lists seven ADF GCP documents. These passage of text in these Reports explicitly argue that the strong, positive influence Australia’s masculine military ‘traditions’ exert in the nation’s armed forces justifies the need to exclude women from combat service. Policy discussions which cite themes related directly to the ADF’s ‘tradition/s’ appear on multiple occasions in the GCP documents listed in Table Six. This thematic repetition occurs over an extended period, from years 1978 to 2001, inclusive. This pattern in the evidence shows how the ADF Executive purposefully portrays Australia’s masculine military ‘traditions’ as being a strong factor that justifies enforcing the GCP. I use text analysis to identify the underlying message these documents communicate when they refer to the ADF’s traditions. These persistent references to tradition demonstrate a pattern Charteris-Black (2011: 21–22) terms ‘systematic
representation”. I argue that the ADF Executive repeats references to military ‘tradition/s’ to defend patriarchal social structures. These policy statements do not occur “on the fly” (Krippendorf 2005: 68). I interpret this persistent behaviour as evidence Australia’s Defence Executive purposefully imagines the ADF’s traditions as being an “apparent” (Myers 1997: NP) reason that justifies enforcing the GCP.

I count 56 references to the word “tradition” and derivatives of this base word such as traditional and traditionally in the ADF’s GCP. This count also includes the use of closely related synonyms in the martial context such as customs and customary. The use of these words relates to discussion that defends the restrictions imposed on women’s military service in the ADF and the Armed Forces of TTCP members. The literal meaning of the English language word ‘tradition’, in certain contexts, may be synonymous with the following English language adjectives:

attitude, belief [my emphasis], birthing right, conclusion, convention, culture [my emphasis], custom, customs, [my emphasis] ethic, ethics, fable, folklore, form, habit, heritage, idea, inheritance, institution, law, legend, lore, mores, myth, mythology, mythos, opinion, practice [my emphasis], praxis, ritual, unwritten law, usage, wisdom (Philip Lief Group 2012: NP).

The passages of text in the ADF’s GCP documents that defend the all-male traditions of military service do not explicitly argue that the ADF’s operational effectiveness automatically erodes if the state partially feminises this institution’s customs. The core argument put forward is that it is acceptable to uphold the traditional sexual division of labour in Australia’s military institution merely because this structure has consistently existed in the past. As shown below, The Thomas Report is representative of the way that references to the theme ‘tradition’ is more repetitive in the three ADF GCP documents published during the 1970s. This pattern in the evidence illustrates how the
ADF Executive and the state took it for granted that they could exclude women from combat service by arguing that women’s roles in society are incompatible with martial roles that bear arms. These policy discussions that centre on social and cultural norms that define fixed gender roles become less popular after Australia ratified CEDAW in 1980 and they continue to become less prominent in public debates after the Australian Parliament enacted the *Sex Discrimination Act* in 1984. By shifting the focus to biobio scientific factors to defend the GCP after 1987 (see Chapter Four) the ADF implicitly acknowledges that it has become difficult to justify enforcing the GCP by focusing on the argument that Australia’s armed forces are traditionally the natural preserve of men.

The Thomas Report emphasises the strong influence the masculine construct of military traditions exerts over the GCP in TTCP member’s military forces when it states that male and female military personnel reject women entering non-traditional military roles where they have previously been absent. This discussion occurs in the section of this Report titled in upper case “ATTITUDES IMPINGING ON THE ASSIGNMENT OF WOMEN” (Thomas 1978: 25). This section is 10 pages long and is representative of the way that the ADF’s GCP documents published during the 1970s provides a detailed discussion of the ways that social and cultural factors influence the restrictions the state imposes on women’s military participation (Thomas 1978: 25–34). Thomas commences her first sentence of this segment by referring to the way male Defence personnel resist women’s presence in non-traditional military roles:

Women who choose to work in an occupation that *traditionally* [my emphasis] has been peopled with men often have to contend with the negative responses of others (Thomas 1978: 25).

In this section of her Report, Thomas (1978: 25–39) cites the word ‘tradition’ and variants of this word (*e.g.* traditional, traditionally) on twelve occasions to discuss
various social and cultural factors that provide an account of the dominant reasons why women are not fully integrated into frontline military roles and leadership roles.

The collection of statements I cite below from passages within pages 25 to 39 of The Thomas Report is typical of the manner in which the three GCP documents published in the 1970s defend the need to preserve this policy by repeatedly citing themes that centre on military traditions. In some cases, these discussions contextualise references to ‘military tradition’ with traditional gender roles and norms that are dominant in the nation’s civilian institutions, such as the family home. This discussion in The Thomas Report relates to Defence Personnel Attitude Surveys conducted by the US Navy and the US Army between 1973 and 1975 (Thomas 1978: 29, 31). The historical context of these surveys reflects gender equality developments promoted by the American state. For example, a raft of Equal Employment Opportunity legislation was enacted by the United States Congress during the 1960s and 1970s such as the *Equal Pay Act 1963* and the *Rehabilitation Act 1973* (United States Securities and Exchange Commission 2013). The Thomas Report discusses the US Defence Force’s interpretation of this data as policy context and extrapolates this discussion to generalise about the similar experiences reported by other TTCP member nations (Thomas 1978: 25). The conservative opinions that appear in this passage, which justify enforcing the GCP, consistently reject the legitimacy of integrating women into non-traditional military duties. The Thomas Report argues that these conservative attitudes are popular among male and female Defence personnel and that this partially explains why women did not engage in armed combat and combat-support units in the Armed Forces of TTCP member nations during the 1970s. For example, Thomas states that:

The [US] Army has also questioned whether or not women would be accepted [by male and female military personnel] into traditionally male occupational specialties [my emphasis] (Thomas 1978: 29).
The two images emerging most clearly from these [US military personnel attitude survey] data were (1) that military women are viewed as contemporary in their role of affiliation [i.e. auxiliary] and (2) that [military] men are viewed as traditional [my emphasis] (Thomas 1978: 31).

Responses to all of the [US Army personnel survey] items except mother’s employment were significantly related to a contemporary/traditional orientation toward a woman’s [auxiliary martial] role [my emphasis] (Thomas 1978: 31).

It is the NTR (Nontraditional Rating) [my emphasis], the woman doing a “man’s job” who is resented [by serving male personnel] whether or not she is a solo woman (Thomas 1978: 36).

The ADF’s GCP documents do not cease to defend the need to preserve the all-male traditions of the ADF’s combat service after the Australian Parliament enacted the Sex Discrimination Act. These references to Australia’s military traditions become much less frequent, but not always less prominent where they appear in the GCP documents. For example, on page 6 (b) of The Quinn and Toulson Report, these military officers commence their exploration of the various reasons that legitimise the enforcement of the GCP. The first sentence of this core section of The Quinn and Toulson Report mentions how the armed forces of TTCP member nations traditionally employ women only in support (i.e. auxiliary) roles. The opening two sentences of this passage of discussion duplicate reference to the root word ‘tradition’. This policy discussion repeats its discussion of the theme ‘tradition’ in a narrow range of text to emphasise the manifest message it seeks to communicate. Quinn and Toulson (1987: 6b) inform their audience that military traditions exert significant influence over the enforcement of the GCP in TTCP member nations:

The proponents of the case against the use of women in combat, centre their arguments around tradition [my emphasis] ... The traditional [my emphasis] arguments against the use of women in combat centre on the assumption that because women have previously served only in an auxiliary [my emphasis] role, there is no need to put women in combat.
This statement in The Quinn and Toulson Report, cited above, imagines female military women as supporters of male personnel by referring to women’s historical participation as ‘auxiliary’ to the contribution made to their military institution. Moreover, in a nuanced manner, this statement implicitly portrays men as decision-makers in the nation’s military institution. Thomas (1978: 36) states that US Army female personnel believe that women who wanted to serve in the US Army as combat personnel had no respect for this institution’s masculine traditions. She also reports that these women also stated they did not wish to serve in leadership roles in this Service:

Contemporary [US Army] enlistees were particular targets of disapproval [among male personnel] for being undisciplined, disrespectful, uncommitted, and lacking in concern for military tradition [my emphasis]. The [unspecified number/percentage of female] respondents also said they did not want to supervise others, despite their recognition that future promotions would require them to do so (Thomas 1978: 36).

I note that Thomas does not mention the percentage of female respondents who indicate that they possess the attitudes she discusses in the passage cited above. This absence of detail illustrates how the GCP published during the 1970s stereotypes all of its female military personnel as being disinterested and generally unsuitable for appointment into combat and senior leadership roles but provide no suitable data to support these claims.

The Quinn and Toulson Report is likewise representative of the way that the ADF’s GCP documents portray the ADF’s traditions as a deeply entrenched male-exclusive construct that fiercely resists the partial feminisation of Australia’s martial culture. Quinn and Toulson (1987: 1) make prominent these discussions concerning military traditions by placing them in the context section of their Report under a heading titled “Historical Perspective” on Page 1 of this document. These military officers contextualise references to military traditions against words that have strong nationalistic connotations such as “homelands”, “tribe” and “symbolic leaders” (Quinn and Toulson 1987: 1). In this
context section, these military officers describe the way warfare exists as an eternal, universal male-exclusive social construction:

Fighting groups, armies, and warriors have always been male, according to Marlowe, and while women have participated in irregular warfare, in the defence of invaded homelands [my emphasis] or as symbolic leaders [my emphasis], they have never been part of [my emphasis] the actual land fighting forces of group, clan, tribe or state [my emphasis] (Quinn and Toulson 1987: 3).

In contrast to the four policy Reports published between 1978 and 1987, the ADF’s GCP documents published after 1987 do not make prominent their discussion of ‘military tradition’ arguments to justify why the state enforces a GCP. For example, The Campbell Report briefly mentions that the traditions of Australia’s Naval Corps explain why female personnel are not welcome in frontline roles in this Service. Campbell (2000: 11) limits her analysis to one short paragraph and she does not refer to military ‘traditions’ in her Executive Summary. On page 11 of her Report, she states:

The implications from this warrior culture is that, despite the RAN’s introduction of the Good Working Relationships Program, traditional cultural values [my emphasis] are still being imparted via [gender] socialisation at the initial point of entry into the RAN (Campbell 2000: 11).

Campbell’s use of the word “despite” in the passage above strongly implies the RAN’s internal “traditional cultural values” is a dominant factor that explains why male naval personnel continue to reject women serving in Australia’s Naval Corps. This problem persists even though the ADF Executive has actively supported the integration of female personnel into all occupations in the RAN except Naval Clearance Diver roles since the early 1990s. Moreover, the Australian Government and Australia’s Defence Executive commissioned three Federal Parliamentary Inquiries during the 1990s whose mission was to identify the barriers and abuse women are subjected to in Australia’s military institution. These were the ‘Senate Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in the Australian
Defence Force’ (Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Committee 1994) and The Bryson Report (Bryson 1994). The ‘Grey Review’ was chaired by Department of Defence official Bronwen Grey (Grey 1998), and Professor Lois Bryson of Newcastle University is the author of ‘The Bryson Report’. These Reports investigate and document the culture of misogyny and that prevailed in the ADFA during the mid-1990s. Both Reports focus on sexual harassment and sexual abuse perpetrated by male personnel towards their female colleagues.

Campbell’s contextualisation of the words “traditional” and “point of entry” in the indented passage I cite above conveys a latent message that Australia’s male naval personnel reject the integration of women into its ranks from the moment female personnel commence service. This discussion communicates a nuanced message that women are not welcome anywhere or anytime by most or all RAN male personnel. Campbell places the broader context of this passage about military traditions in a nationalist context. This section of her Report that discusses the hostile attitudes male naval personnel display towards female naval personnel occurs under a bold font header titled “Warrior Culture” (Campbell 2000: 11). This reference to the ‘warrior’ reminds its audience that images of the fighter exist as a fixed, male-exclusive gender role and that this archetype enjoys a prominent, elevated cultural status in the national imagination. Virtually all societies and nations portray the warrior as an all-male social construction, and this nationalistic figure is mostly associated with armed military personnel who engage on the frontline during warfare (e.g. Youngman 2000: 36–51). Campbell’s discussion of the ADF’s “warrior culture” (Campbell 2000: 11) refers to a cultural role, combat that is quintessentially masculine and has always been the exclusive domain of male elites.
**Male elites**

ADF personnel with combat experience dominate policy discussions which argue that female combat personnel are incompatible with the traditions of Australia’s military institution and/or this service’s combat corps. In a similar vein to the ADF’s GCP documents, male Defence personnel rarely argue that the partial feminisation of the ADF’s customs automatically erodes the ADF’s fighting capacities. These personnel take for granted that military tradition arguments do not require elaboration. The essence of these arguments centres on the historical fact that Australia’s women have never served in combat roles in Australia’s armed forces and this explains why the traditions of Australia’s military institution must remain exclusively masculine.

Australia’s male combat personnel personally experience the ADF’s masculine traditions and this historical fact explains why these individuals are the fiercest defenders of this bastion of male privilege (e.g. Phelps 1997). For example, serving Australian Army Combat Officer, Lieutenant Weatherill (1996) argues that the persistence of Australia’s GCP is “primarily” attributable to Defence “attitudes” that prevail among male ADF personnel. These men believe that the ADF’s culture must remain male-dominated, especially in the Australian Army. Weatherill discusses this argument in a journal article titled “Gender Awareness in the Australian Defence Force”. He brings this viewpoint about ‘male attitudes’ to the forefront of his discussion by introducing this theme on the first page. Weatherill’s article appears in the *Australian Defence Force Journal* in the same year Clare Burton published *The Burton Report*. This decade marks the period where references to bioscience become increasingly popular as the dominant focus of public debates that defend the GCP. Weatherill’s statement is a product of his time,
because he shows an awareness of bioscience debates, as evident from use of the word “ability”. This Infantry officer explicitly debunks the argument that this factor offers a partial explanation for why the state enforces the GCP:

Whether or not women will or should participate in combat is primarily based upon attitudes and beliefs [my emphasis] about gender roles than empirical evidence or one’s ability [my emphasis] ... The ADF, and especially that of the Army, is undoubtedly one of the strongest bastions of male dominated attitudes, beliefs and practices [my emphasis] (Lieutenant J. A. Weatherill, Infantry Division, Australian Army, 1996: 43).

In a similar vein to Lieutenant Weatherill’s statement above, ADF combat-classified personnel of Executive Rank such as Admiral Chris Barrie repeatedly cite the ADF’s male-centric traditions as a strong factor that impedes the advancement of women into combat roles. These references to the ADF’s traditions rarely appear in public debates over the past decade as policy discussions centre overwhelmingly on biophysical arguments. Barrie (2000: 4) argues that the ADF’s culture is slow to integrate women into frontlines roles because Australia “traditionally has a male dominated Defence Force”. In the next passage of his speech, Barrie argues that women are unlikely to serve in combat roles in the near future. This is evident by his use of the strong words “very long term” to defend his viewpoint that the ADF’s masculine culture cannot change “overnight”. This choice of language explicitly informs his audience that the masculine traditions of Australia’s military institution stubbornly resist the integration of women into armed fighting roles:

The reason for that [absence of women from combat roles] is because these sorts of changes do not happen overnight [my emphasis], and making cultural change [my emphasis] is indeed a very long term [my emphasis] task (Admiral Chris Barrie, Chief of the ADF 2000: 5).
These discussions I cite above by Weatherill (1996: 43) and Barrie (2000: NP) that focus on ADF customs are representative of arguments put forward by other men who have combat experience and support the GCP. These statements normally appear in published documents and do not occur “on the fly” (Krippendorf 2005: 68). Barrie (2000) published his speech as a book chapter in an edited volume titled “Women in Uniform – Perceptions and Pathways”. Weatherill’s opinion appears in the ADF’s *Defence Force Journal* (Weatherill 1996: 43). These statements are purposeful and this observation strongly suggests these combat personnel use language that aims to sway their audience into believing/agreeing that women are incompatible with the masculine traditions of the ADF’s core duties, Direct Combat. Essentially, these references to ‘tradition’ argue that the state must not appoint women into a bastion of all-male privilege that enjoys a prominent status in Australia’s national imagination.

Over the past decade, male Defence personnel show more caution with their choice of words when they discuss the influence the ADF’s masculine traditions exert over the enforcement of Australia’s GCP. ADF Combat Officer Major Scott Davison explores the history of Australia’s GCP shortly after the Australian Army integrates the first cohort of women into combat-support roles in Artillery Units. Before he commences his discussion of the ADF’s traditions, Davison (2007: 70) provides historical context and argues that the ADF’s older personnel are the least likely to accept that there are legitimate reasons that justify the state reversing Australia’s GCP. He argues that the ADF’s masculine traditions are deeply ingrained and that this partially explains why Australia’s male Defence personnel reject the integration of female personnel into frontline roles. Australia’s male personnel see the reversal of the GCP as a threat to their masculinity as this regime portrays men as the most competent military personnel:
The notion of reconstructing military service in *non-traditional* [my emphasis] terms would perhaps be regarded by many as extreme; yet it bore witness to the fact that the increasing presence of women in the military was disruptive of, or at least worked to modify military culture to the extent that the validity of male superiority was open to question, particularly if women were competent at performing those [military] tasks *traditionally* [my emphasis] performed by men (Major Scott Davison, Australian Army Artillery Corps, 2007: 71)."

The military’s traditions foster a culture of male privilege and male exclusivity and this in turn subordinates women in the military institution. The Armed Forces enjoy a prominent place in the national imagination because of its unique role as creator and defender of the nation (Yuval-Davis 1997a: 93–96). The size of Australia’s civil–military gender gap is in fact relatively narrow, even when Australia excluded all women from Direct Combat roles prior to 1 January 2013 (Smith 1995: 541). The subordination of women to men has occurred beyond the military institution and has persisted in the nation’s civilian society, especially in the family home and the work sector since ‘white’ Britain settled Australia as a British colony (Aveling 1992). This patriarchal structure has persisted since 1788 (Summers 2000; Summers 2002: 425–466) although to a lesser extent in Australia’s civilian labour market. This is because no Federal laws or Federal Government policies have excluded women from occupying any frontline work role in any public institution in Australia’s work sector since 1901, whereas Australia’s military institution has perpetually imposed varying restrictions on women’s right to work in frontline military (ADF1999; Snowdon 2012). This exclusion of women from armed fighting roles is significant as the armed forces have been one of Australia’s top 10 largest employers during the period of this study. In 2006, Defence employed more than 100,000 civilian and uniformed staff, ranking this the second largest employer in Australia after the Coles Myer Group (*e.g.* Bartlett 2006; ABS 2012).
5.3 Family and work

Context

The ADF’s GCP documents and other elites compare the sexual division of labour that exists in Australia’s armed forces and to fixed gendered roles that are dominant in the family home and the nation’s civilian work sector. The military, family home and the work sector feature prominently in Australia’s cultural images and cultural narratives. Gender stereotypes imagine men as breadwinners in the work sector and women assume the binary opposite role of wives and mothers who stay at home to attend to domestic duties (Lake 1992), although these stereotypes erode over time (Probert 2010). In this sub-section, I argue that this pattern in the data provides evidence that supporters of the GCP seek to preserve and replicate the patriarchal character of Australian nationalism beyond the military institution.

Defenders of the GCP frequently argue that traditional gender roles that prevail in the family home and economy partially explain why the state excludes women from combat service. Castle’s historical account of Australia’s GCP contextualises references to traditional gender roles that exist in Australia’s military institution with those that dominate Australia’s civilian society. This is clear when he states, “Traditionally, men have been the killers and women the nurturers in society (Castle 1978: 115).” Castle brings this argument to the forefront of his discussion and explores it on the second page of his 27-page journal article. He presents this passage as historical context to explain to his readers why Australia enforces a GCP. His prominent placement of Australia’s cultural traditions is representative of the way other male elites who defend the GCP
elevate their argument that it is natural for women to assume roles that are subordinate to men within the civilian society and military institution.

Defenders of the GCP highlight the ways that fixed gender roles are deeply normalised in Australia’s national imagination. These statements communicate a latent message that the creation of a female warrior archetype is incompatible with Australia’s social fabric. Men have historically assumed the role of killer in the nation’s martial sphere. The absence of a female combat warrior is a dominant factor that subordinates women to men in the military institution. Women have assumed the role of mother in the family home and this duty is supportive of the all-male breadwinner who heads the family household. This killer–mother binary replicates traditional fixed gender roles in the family home and the military institution. The feminine image of the mother and the masculine image of the all-male warrior are deeply entrenched archetypes that feature prominently in Australia’s cultural narratives and martial images (Lake 1992). The traditional nuclear family and the Armed Forces are prominent institutions that underpin the sexual division of labour and power in Australia’s national images and cultural narratives (Lake 1992).

The structural subordination of women to men in the civilian work sector is a major factor that accounts for men’s economic empowerment in the public and private domains of Australia’s society. Men’s elevated economic status is realised partly by social structures and social policies that promote the male breadwinner model, which in turn replicates gendered pay disparities in Australia’s work sector (Women’s Electoral Lobby 1991b; Curtin 2003). For example, in 2012, the average wage earned by Australian women was $1,186.90. This average wage was $250.50 or 17.4% lower than the average wage earned by Australian men, $1,437.40. Australia’s female workers continue to
dominate the headcount of casual and part-time positions in lower-paying work sectors such as childcare and retail (Australian Government Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency 2013: NP; Wade 2013). In 2013, women comprised only 3% of chairperson positions and only 2% of chief executive officers on the Boards of the Australian Stock Exchange’s top 200 capitalised corporations (Women on Boards 2013: NP).

The social structures that underpin the family home and the work sector in Australia have perpetually favoured men since the colonial period, although this gender equality gap is waning over time. This historical context provides the dominant explanation for economic statistics that depict gender inequality in Australia’s work sector (Summers 2002) such as the pay gap between men and women (Summers 2008: 3–4). Another explanation is that the state’s welfare policies traditionally encourage women to assume the role of homemaker and mother and promote men as the natural breadwinner (Cass 1995). For example, prior to 1987, the state awarded eligible women a widow’s pension but a widower’s pension was not established in Australia until 1987 (Cass 1995: 43). Since the late 1980s, the state has de-gendered its welfare regime.

Australia’s Federal public policy rarely favours one sex over the other in a manner that is explicit, such as the example where the state provides a widow’s pension but not a widower’s pension. Affirmative action policy interventions that aim to advance the status of women in women in the work sector are a rare example where the state explicitly promotes policies which aim to offer benefits only to one sex, i.e., women (International Women’s News 1989: 6; Summers 2008: 5). In contrast to these developments in
Australia’s public institutions, many Australians privately support the traditional sexual division of labour that exists in the economy. For example, many male and female leaders in Australia’s work sector favour recruiting and promoting men over women because they harbour a preference advancing men in their organisation. Gender discrimination is often subtle and purposefully concealed because it is normally unlawful if it occurs in the work sector. Furthermore, social norms that support the preservation of fixed gender roles continue to erode and it is no longer socially acceptable for employers to enforce policies in the work sector that deliberately marginalise women and elevate men. This explains why employers and managers rarely use explicit language to show that they favour one gender over another (e.g. Australian Law Reform Commission 1994: Part II, Chapter 3).

**Policy accounts**

The ADF’s GCP documents justify the exclusion of women from combat service by referring to the fact that deeply entrenched social norms uphold fixed gender roles in the family home and economy. These references to the family home and economy recur in the seven ADF GCP documents listed in Table Six. The thrust of these arguments asserts that the sexual division of labour that exists in the civilian society partially explains the persistence of the GCP because it is natural for women to assume roles in the national project that are subordinate to men. The subordination of women to men in the work sector of Australia’s civilian society and its military institution supports the argument that Australia’s civil–military gender gap is in fact relatively narrow (e.g. Smith 1995: 541).
Policy discussions that centre on traditional gender roles are more frequent, prominent and explicit in the four GCP Reports published before policy document DI-(G) PERS 32-1. Sample data cited in Table Six illustrates this pattern and it provides further evidence that the ADF’s GCP documents are influenced by dominant social norms that exist in the civilian society when these Reports are created as supporters of the GCP shift debates towards biology. The ADF can no longer defend the GCP by arguing that it is the duty of Australia’s women to support the nation’s men by assuming their natural role of mothers and homemakers. In recent decades, Australia’s women, including working mothers, have integrated into civilian occupations traditionally dominated by men such as engineering. In 2006, around 11% of Australia’s Engineers were women (Marinelli and Calais 2011: 1). This is a significant increase over women’s participation rates in this field, which were around 3% in 1980 (Burrowes 2006: NP).

The content of The Thomas Report is a representative example of the way in which the GCP documents published between 1978 and 1987 consistently argue that traditional gender roles that are dominant in Australia’s civilian society provide a strong account of why the state imposes various restrictions on women’s military service. This Report makes prominent its discussion of gendered norms by asking the rhetorical question “1. Is society ready to let women participate in warfare?” (Thomas 1978: vii). By stating this question in the third sentence of the opening paragraph of her Executive Summary, Thomas (1978: vii) elevates the profile of the point about society being ‘ready’. The prefix “1.”, denotes that this is the first issue of three factors The Thomas Report explores to justify the exclusion of women from combat service in TTCP member nations. This reference to society being “ready” to allow women into frontline service has nationalist connotations concerning the role of women in their nation’s civilian
society and military institution. This rhetorical question does not automatically relate to
the policy argument that questions whether women have the physical and mental
capacity to perform combat service (e.g. Segal 1982: 270–271, 281).

The three GCP documents published during the 1970s explicitly justify the restrictions
the state imposes on women’s military service by contextualising these constraints
according to fixed gender role binaries that are dominant in Australia’s civilian society
and other western nations’ civilian societies. These gender roles notably include cultural
norms that imagine the nations’ women as wives, mothers and homemakers. For
example, this reference to dominant gender roles appears in a passage of The Regular
Officer Development Committee Report that examines a personnel survey conducted by
the Australian Army in 1978. This poll captures attitude data from female Australian
Army personnel concerning their career intentions. This survey asks female Army
personnel to predict how future changes to their family arrangements might influence
their decision to resign from the Army. This research also measures the degree which
factors such as “Marriage and Pregnancy”, “Move of Husband” to another civilian work
location or to another military base and “Having Children” will influence planned
average length of service for female personnel currently serving in the Australian Army
(Australian Army 1978b: Chapter 6-14).

The way The RODC Part A Report discusses survey data concerning female personnel
career intentions suggests the Australian Army regards its female personnel as natural
homemakers who are unlikely to pursue a long-term military career after they have their
first child. This Report states that it is likely that most of its female personnel will
assume the role of a full-time mother who stays at home to care for her child/children. I
note that the RODC Part A Report does not quantify the gap which ostensibly exists between male and female average length of service in the Australian Army prior to circa 1978. Moreover, this Report does not discuss whether the Australian Army captures equivalent survey data (e.g. ‘move of wife’) to determine if/when male personnel plan to exit the Army if their family circumstances change (Australian Army 1978a: 42–50). Maternity leave was not widespread in Australia’s work sector in 1978 and the Australian Government has never funded a universal maternity leave scheme. The Australian Council of Trade Unions won the right to unpaid maternity leave in 1979 (Australian Council of Trade Unions 2013: NP). Government policies that encourage or discourage maternity leave could potentially exert a strong influence over gender politics in Australia. This is because the state may manipulate this regime to distinguish men’s and women’s rights, and options in the work sector and personal choices they make between family–work trade-offs (Curtin 2003; O’Neil and Johns 2009).

Table Seven, overleaf, displays a list of statements I extract from The Thomas Report, The RODC Part A Report and The Quinn and Toulson Report. The context of these discussions refers to the fact that historically Australia’s women occupy roles in the family home which are subordinate to the male role of ‘breadwinner’ in the heteronormative nuclear family. This collection of statements is a representative example of how the four ADF GCP documents published between 1978 and 1987 are more explicit and repetitious in the way they discuss the ways the nation’s women are naturalised as supporters of men in the family home. This pattern in the primary evidence is consistent with the way the nationalism literature theorises the sexual division of labour in the national project. Women assume the role of “mothers and carers” (Billig 1995: 126) in the national imagination. Cultural and political institutions within the nation replicate the
The patriarchal state replicates warfare and frontline soldiering as masculine constructs to uphold the cultural order-of-power that elevates men’s citizenship status. Moreover, the exclusion of women from the front subordinates women to men in the nation’s imagination by preserving the “gendered politics of citizenship” (Yuval-Davis 2004: 170). A GCP replicates the sexual division of labour that elevates men as action-makers and portrays women in passive roles such as antimilitarists (Yuval-Davis 2004). Male elites and other men actively replicate social norms that imagine the protection of the nation as an all-masculine construction. They do this to preserve internal hierarchies of power that exist in the nation. These social structures are gendered because they elevate the cultural status men enjoy in the national project by portraying men as empowered protectors of the vulnerable homeland (Mayer 2000: 6–7).

Text I cite in Table Six from The Quinn and Toulson Report show how this policy document justifies enforcing the GCP by explicitly drawing attention to the reality that women rarely engage in the nation’s military institution in frontline roles and that historical records confirm this fact. Discussion in this section of The Quinn and Toulson Report is typical of how the GCP documents contextualise their discussion of fixed gender roles that are dominant in the civilian society, the family home (e.g. women as “wives”) and the military domain and emphasises the way these binaries are naturalised. Reference to the martial sphere is evident from this Report’s reference to women assuming the role of the warrior if their husbands are killed in battle during war (Quinn and Toulson 1987: iv). This discussion exemplifies the way the ADF’s GCP documents justify the exclusion of female personnel from combat service by implicitly supporting
the gendered division of labour and power that prevails in Australia’s civilian society and military institution.
Table Six
ADF Policy Documents: References to ‘Tradition/s’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Policy discussion context</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Thomas Report</td>
<td>(Thomas 1978: 31)</td>
<td>“In 1976, the [US] Navy asked samples of active duty women and military wives to indicate sex role affiliations for themselves and men and women in the Navy ... Responses to all of the items except mother’s employment were significantly related to a contemporary/traditional orientation toward a woman’s role.”</td>
<td>Pages 25–34 of this Report occur under the header “ATTITUDES IMPINGING ON THE ASSIGNMENT OF WOMEN”. This section explores whether US Navy personnel will accept women working in frontline roles that are “traditionally male occupational specialties” (Thomas 1978: 29), duties that are incompatible with their traditional roles of wives and mothers in the family home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The RODC Part A Report</td>
<td>(Australian Army 1978a: 46)</td>
<td>“The question [concerning women’s average length of service] may be broken down as follows: if women were admitted to the Profession of Arms by way of RMC [Royal Military College] or OCS [Officer Cadet School]: a. Would average length of service for women officers increase? b. Would women officers remain in the Army after marriage? c. Could women officers remain in the Army once they commenced a family? d. If women officers left the Army to raise a family: (1). How many would re-enlist after raising the family?”</td>
<td>In a similar vein to Chapter 6-14 of the RODC Report, this section of The RODC Report Part A appeals to the stereotype that women are traditionally unsuitable for combat-support and combat roles partially because their average length of service is ostensibly lower than men’s service. The Australian Army argues that women are less suitable than are men for military service as they are more likely to exit the Australian Army to care for the family’s children and home. This Report does not cite personnel data to substantiate this claim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Quinn and Toulson Report</td>
<td>(Quinn and Toulson 1987: iv)</td>
<td>“Historical accounts of women in combat are rare ... There are also accounts of women participating in battles disguised as men, or stepping into front line positions to replace their husbands who have been killed or wounded.”</td>
<td>The Quinn and Toulson Report illustrates that a subtle policy shift occurs after the late 1970s. The GCP documents published after 1978 diminish the role that family duties exert over the enforcement of the GCP. This is the only part of this document that discusses family roles and this discussion is limited to sentence. This reference is indirect; it portrays women as natural housewives who engage in frontline warfare when their husband is killed in battle.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All bold italicised text depicts my emphasis and not the original emphasis in the policy document.
The ADF’s GCP documents published after 1987 do not explicitly refer to the way women are naturalised as mothers and homemakers in the national project to justify the exclusion of women from combat roles. Stereotypes that portray women as the nation’s mothers and homemakers gradually erode as the trend towards gender equality advances in Australia’s civilian society (Probert 2010). This convergence between the gender norms that are dominant in Australia’s civilian society and military institution reaffirms Smith’s research. He argues the that state and ADF leadership has largely adjusted to changes that occurred at the close of the Twentieth Century in Australia’s civilian society, such as the expansion of women engaging in non-traditional work roles and the general increase of female labour participation rates in the work sector. To some degree, these developments narrowed Australia’s civil–military gender gap as prior to 1990 women were excluded from working in most employment categories in their nation’s armed forces and around only 5% of total officer and non-officer positions were open to women in 1979 (Smith 1995: 539–541).

The Ferguson Report is explicit when it denies that Australia enforces a GCP partially or solely because it appeases those persons/institutions that support the replication of traditional fixed gender roles in Australia’s civilian society and military institution. This position is clear when this Report states: “No longer is the role of women in society being restricted to that of home carer [my emphasis] (Dunn 1998: 5).” This policy document implicitly shows awareness of the ongoing momentum towards gender equality that has transpired in Australia’s civilian society. Dunn (1998: 5) elevates the priority of this discussion. He explores this argument about gender roles second of the 17 policy factors which he examines in this document. This section of The Ferguson Report is a core section of this policy document as it is the main body of this document. In this
section, Dunn (1998: 4–13) examines the reasons why a GCP may be enforced and evaluates whether these factors influence the persistence of this regime in the ADF.

**Gender equality**

During the 1970s, women and men in Australia’s civilian society began to challenge deeply entrenched social norms that accepted the idea that armed military fighting roles were the natural preserve of men. A handful of citizens from Australia’s civilian community wrote to Australia’s Defence Ministry to complain that the GCP was a negative form of discrimination against women and I briefly refer to this in my Introduction Chapter as historical context. The second oldest letter of complaint on file at the Australian National Archives is dated 1970 (e.g. Australian National Council of Women 1970). I found one letter of complaint stored at the Australian National Archives in Canberra dated prior to 1970 that protests the diminished status of women in Australia’s armed forces. Eminent Australian feminist Jessie Street is the author of this letter (Street 1942). These complaints written during the 1970s are evidence that the realisation of gender equality in Australia’s armed forces started to emerge as a policy issue, albeit to a minor degree, in this nation’s civilian population in the 1970s. This is clear from how Defence and Government leaders responded during the first half of this decade and implemented multiple reviews of the status of women’s Service conditions, such as the Defence Review commissioned in 1974 and conducted in 1975. Prime Minister Whitlam instigated this Review to honour the ‘United Nations International Year of Women: 1975’ (MacLeod 1975: 5–6).
During the early 1970s, the pervasive manner in which Australia’s women were subordinate to men entered the mainstream of public debate as a divisive social issue. The creation of the Women’s Electoral Lobby National Head Office in Sydney in 1972 was a reaction to the growing number of Australian women, especially among liberal rights feminist scholars, who lobbied the state to promote full gender equality in the public and private sphere (e.g. Sawer 2004). The Women’s Electoral Lobby supported the dismantling of Australia’s patriarchal structures and the realisation of full gender equality, especially in the political domain, the economy and the family home. These are founding principles that this organisation has long pursued in the public domain (e.g. Women’s Electoral Lobby 1991a).

Defence policy documents published in the 1970s provide evidence the ADF/TTCP Executive was aware that critics of the GCP argued that the exclusion of women from combat service was an unjustifiable form of discrimination against women. Moreover, most opponents of this regime believed it served no legitimate operational basis other than to preserve male dominance in the nation’s military institution and to uphold patriarchal structures of the state apparatus. These discussions occur at prominent places in these documents. This pattern in the evidence suggests Australia’s Defence Executive and TTCP took seriously the need to address concerns expressed in the civilian community that the exclusion of women from a range of combat and combat-support roles was a sexist policy that benefited men and oppressed women.

In its Introduction section, The RODC Report Part A explores the argument put forward by detractors of the GCP that this regime discriminates against women. This discussion occurs over two pages and commences under a sub-header titled “Cultural Revolution”
This part of The RODC Report Part A examines the historical context of women’s military service in the Australian Army. In the first paragraph of this section, the Australian Army states: “women have never entirely returned to the [family] home” since entering the work sector *en masse* since the emergence of the “cultural revolution in western society”. This Report states that the commencement of the First World War in 1914 was the cause of this civilian revolution and marks the approximate date the social movement commenced. The First Wave Feminist Movement gained a strong momentum in other western nations in the 1910s. For example, the number of nations which enacted universal suffrage increased almost six-fold from three (New Zealand, Australia and Finland) in 1906 to 17 by 1922, all of which were western nations (Shanahan *et al.* 1997: 743). Western nations such as Australia, France and Britain that fought in the First World War experienced chronic personnel shortages in their civilian society and military institution. The state integrated women into many non-traditional occupations in the civilian work sector *en masse* (Australian Army 1978a: 10–11).

The RODC Part A Report acknowledges how Australia’s civilian society began to challenge social norms that stereotype the role and place of women in this nation’s public and private institutions. The Australian Army states that these changes become more prominent during the 1960s, the decade where the Civic Rights Movement mainstreamed in most western nations. I argue that this discussion offers token recognition of gender equality issues and focuses overwhelmingly on defending a policy regime that purposefully seeks to preserve fixed gender roles in Australia’s military institution. In this passage of the RODC Report Part A, the Australian Army explores the status of women in the work sector during the late 1970s. The Australian Army
acknowledges that the number of women entering fulltime work continues to grow. This discussion focuses on the reality that women work mostly in non-professional roles:

> More women than men are now responsible for the formal education of the nation’s children [my emphasis]. There are some [my emphasis] women practising in all professions – except the profession of arms [my emphasis]. (Australian Army 1978a: 11)"

The text I cite above highlights the implicit gendered division of labour that defines the creation of the nation. This statement by the Australian Army imagines Australia’s women as the natural educators of the nation’s children. Moreover, the direct juxtaposition of the words ‘nation’s’ and ‘children’ in this passage reinforces the way Australia’s women are naturalised as mothers in the civilian society, particularly within the family home. This discussion communicates a nuanced message that the appointment of the nation’s mothers to frontline fighting duties is incompatible with the way that dominant social norms portray the warrior, a taker of life as an all-male role and archetype (e.g. Yuval-Davis 2004).

This passage in The RODC Report Part A that I cite immediately above highlights one way in which women remain subordinate to men in Australia’s civilian work sector. The Australian Army make this point by inserting the word “some” to diminish women’s contribution to the professions, as it highlights low female participation rates in these occupations. This reference to ‘professions’ relates to those male-dominated occupations (e.g. mining) that normally command a higher salary, more prestige and cultural power than unskilled work roles dominated by female workers such as childcare and nursing (e.g. Freidson 1988). Moreover, the inclusion of the words “except the profession of arms” informs its audience the exclusion of working-women from Australia’s Land
Army combat roles is a deeply entrenched cultural norm. This choice of language and the juxtaposition of these references to particular work categories highlight the sexual division of labour that exists in Australia’s civilian society. This gendered binary imagines women as naturally suited to working in occupations that attract significantly less pay and status than jobs men dominate in the work sector. Traditionally Australian women have been encouraged to stay at home as mothers, and their participation in the labour market is legitimate when they pursue careers in industries that serve and care for others or in roles that support men. Carer occupations invariably command less pay in Australia’s work sector than professions where women record low participation rates such as medicine (Probert 2010: 7–8, 12). This passage from The RODC Part A Report draws attention to the reality that Australia’s civil–military gender gap is narrow during the 1970s. The subtle language this document uses in this passage imagines women as unsuitable for combat service by informing its audience that entrenched cultural norms fix gender roles and enforce a sexual division of labour and power in the work sector in Australia’s civilian society and military institution.

**Policy shift**

There is some evidence of a subtle shift in policy debate in The Quinn and Toulson Report. In contrast to the GCP documents published during the 1970s, this Report does not focus primarily on nationalist themes to argue that women should not perform combat because this is incompatible with entrenched social and cultural norms that fix gender roles. The altered terms of reference that occurs here is from criteria of gender to operational capacity. In the opening paragraph of the main body The Quinn and Toulson Report, it states, “the *bottom line* [my emphasis] of any military force is the ability to
participate and survive in combat (Quinn and Toulson 1987: 1).” This opening sentence provides the foundation for the policy discussion that occurs throughout this document. The full content of The Quinn and Toulson Report centres on the argument put forward primarily by Defence leaders that the appointment and integration of female combat personnel undermine the operational effectiveness of the ADF’s combat corps. I explore these arguments in my next chapter from a bio-power standpoint.

Since the *Sex Discrimination Act* became law in 1984, the patriarchal family structure gradually started to lose influence in the national project and this momentum continues. Numerous social changes that occurred during this period in Australia’s family household structures and the work sector explain why the nuclear family, a patriarchal structure, gradually became less popular over time. Examples of these developments include the recognition of same-sex relationships in the Australian Census, continued growth in divorce rates and single-parent households and the increasing number of non-partnered women who opt to conceive via *in vitro* fertilisation (Saggers and Sims 2005). These social developments in Australia are similar to those that transpired in western societies during the same timeframe. We cannot assume that the erosion of fixed gender roles in the national project, especially within the work sector, automatically feminises the patriarchal global order. Walby (2000: 527–528) argues the influence these gendered developments exert over the masculine world order is relatively small. She asserts that there is no evidence that women’s status in the national project has increased in western nations, as the gender gap between men and women remains large in social, political and cultural power structures. Walby (2000: 528) concludes that patriarchy remains a dominant force in the realm of global gender politics.
The Ferguson Report, The Campbell Report and The Holden and Tanner Report barely explore the argument women should not perform combat service as this duty is incompatible with pre-existing gender roles which define the role of the nation’s women and men in the civilian society and military institution. In a similar vein to The Quinn and Toulson Report, these policy documents focus overwhelmingly on two debates that sometimes overlap conceptually. The first argument asserts that women cannot do combat. The second debate, which I explore in later chapters, centres on the concern that the creation of a female combat fighter automatically undermines the ADF’s operational effectiveness because it undermines group cohesion in combat units and because the female combat body is unable to reach combat competency standards.

The Ferguson Report does not argue that the state must uphold fixed traditional gender roles that are dominant in Australia’s work sector, family home and military institution. This document also does not acknowledge this debate exists or that the state’s support for the enforcement of fixed gender roles has ever influenced Australia’s Defence policies (Dunn 1998: 4–13). The Ferguson Report briefly examines the role played by the protector–protected gender binary (Dunn 1998: 10). The conceptual literature that explores female protectionism arguments exposes the myth of the protector–protected binary, which is rooted in the idea that only the male body and mind is physically capable of protecting the nation, as women as physically and mentally the weaker sex (e.g. Stiehm 1982: 374). Female protectionism arguments are fundamentally embodied.

In a similar vein to The Ferguson Report, The Campbell Report shows strong evidence of a policy shift away from arguments that focus on the idea that women should not
perform combat. This document explicitly debunks the stereotype that portrays female Defence personnel as unsuitable for combat service because they take more family leave than male Defence personnel do. The Campbell Report explores this argument over four pages (Campbell 2000: 5–8) under a sub-header titled “Parenting and Deployment” (Campbell 2000: 5). This extended discussion communicates a strong message that the ADF Executive has publicly abandoned its position that women are unsuitable for combat as they are naturalised in the national imagination as mothers and homemakers. Campbell (2000: 7) reports that male ADF personnel also take parental leave and that both male and female personnel exit the Armed Services for family-related reasons, such as the need to care for a child. Campbell (2000: 7) cites data captured by the ADF’s 1999 Census to support her argument. For example, she mentions how a similar number of male personnel (497) and female personnel (358) are single-parents.

The thematic content and emphases of The Ferguson Report, The Campbell Report and The Holden and Tanner Report are consistent with the character of the debates which have occurred in the public domain over the past two decades. It is increasingly rare for the state and other supporters of the GCP to argue that the nation’s women should not perform combat because of cultural traditions that define fixed gender roles. The focus of policy debate beyond Australia’s Defence Executive has likewise shifted overwhelmingly toward the bio-performance of the gendered combat body. Major Scott Davison’s account of the history of the GCP is representative of the manner in which supporters of the GCP centre on biological factors by focusing on differences between performances, the average male body being a superior performer:
Davison (2007: 60) acknowledges the growing influence of Australia’s gender equality movement. He makes this point immediately after referring to the strong role played by gendered physiological differences in contemporary times insofar as defenders of the GCP support their position by focusing on the idea the female body is ‘unable’. The way he juxtaposes his discussion of these two competing debates in a narrow passage of text is typical of the way the rights versus readiness divisive debate has become the dominant conceptual debate Australian feminists explore when they write about Australia’s GCP (e.g. Hancock 1993; Agostino 2000). The rights versus readiness divide is also the most popular debate defenders of the GCP explore when they examine competing debates, especially in data created after circa 1989 as shown in my analysis in forthcoming chapters.

Davison (2007: 60) surmises that the integration of female personnel into the ADF’s combat-support roles occurs “in an unprecedented era in terms of [Australia’s women] winning battles against discrimination and harassment.” Davison makes this point in an article published in the Australian Army Journal. His research provides a comprehensive policy account to explain the history of the various restrictions the state has imposed on women’s military service in Australia’s armed forces and his analysis centres on the exclusion of women from combat roles (Davison 2007: 63).

Policy debates that focus on family and economy interconnect with discussions that centre the need to preserve the gendered character of Australia’s military archetypes and
martial narratives. The sexual division of labour and cultural power bonds these debates and I establish this connection in Section 4.4. Supporters of the GCP frequently defend the need to preserve gender roles dominant in Australia’s national martial symbols. Fixed gendered roles that prevail in the family home and civilian work sector share many parallels with those in Australia’s armed forces and male elites who support the GCP. These endeavors contextually contextualise these similarities as a means to justify their position. I argue that this pattern in the data provides strong evidence that these men seek to preserve the patriarchal character of nationalism in Australia’s civilian society and military institution.

5.4 Hunters and warriors

The content of The RODC Report is representative of the way the GCP documents published during the 1970s persistently portray women as naturally suited to cultural roles in the national imagination which are the opposite to the function of the warrior, who is a professional killer. These policy documents persistently inform its audience women traditionally dominate nursing roles in Australia’s armed forces. The context of these discussions explains why women have never engaged in a range of frontline military duties, especially direct combat roles. These statements highlight entrenched, fixed gender roles that define the role and place of men and women in the national imagination in a nuanced manner. The warrior role is often absent from these discussions but references to this function are implicit as policy documents and elites focus on the role of the military nurse who is a healer in an environment where death and injury is common during warfare. These discussions about women’s suitability to nursing provide social context to justify why women do not serve in combat roles in Australia’s armed
forces. The military nursing sister is a quintessentially feminine archetype in Australia’s national consciousness (Reed 1999). Women were engaged as nurses in Australia’s colonial armed forces since 1898, and have served in all offshore wars and campaigns offshore since Australia became a federation in 1901 (Bryant and Walsh 2006: 1). Moreover, female Defence personnel perpetually dominated the headcount of nursing roles in Australia’s military institution (Espie 1998: 103; Bryant 2006: 1–8) and civilian society (Short and Sharman 1987), with women accounting for 90.4% of total nurses employed in Australia in 2009 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2009: NP). This reality provides the dominant account explaining why this cultural role exists as a female stereotype in the nation’s imagination (Buttsworth 2004: 24, 396).

The RODC Report repeatedly imagines Australia’s women as naturally suited to nursing roles in Australia’s military institution. An example of this portrayal of military nurses as a feminine construction occurs in the historical policy context section of this Report:

Today female officers [my emphasis] are employed in a number of administrative and specialized fields and also continue their long association with military nursing [my emphasis] (Australian Army 1978b: Chapter 6–2).

Images of the all-female nursing sister dominate Australia’s war memorials and Australia’s war narratives rarely celebrate men as healers of war (Inglis 1987: 37). This gendered martial symbol is a stereotype as it conceals the historical fact that male Defence personnel have served in their nation’s armed forces as nurses since Australia’s military institution appointed male nurses shortly after the conclusion of the Second World War (e.g. Espie 1998: 103). The statement by the Australian Army I cite above, which mentions that women have a “long association” with nursing, communicates a
manifest message that Australia’s female military personnel remain naturalised as supporters of men in Australia’s Land Army. The cultural role of the military nursing sister is subordinate to the elevated binary role of the all-male warrior in the national imagination as this role is excluded from the ‘serious’ action of engaging in battle with the enemy on the frontline theatre of warfare (Buttsworth 2003: 37–38).

Supporters of Australia’s GCP routinely defend entrenched gender norms that naturalise the martial archetype image of the ‘frontline combat warrior’ and the ‘hunter’ as all-male constructions. These discussions provide a nuanced defence of the elevated cultural status and privileges bestowed on men in Australia’s national project. They also mention that these two symbols are naturalised as masculine constructions domestically and globally. Visual, textual and oral references to the cultural image of the armed “hunter” (Cassidy 1983: 23) and the armed soldier, the ‘warrior’, exist as all-male archetypes in virtually all societies and civilisations throughout the course of recorded history (Yuval-Davis 1997a: 93). Images of female warriors are rare and normally celebrate mythical icons. The all-female Amazon warriors from classical Greek mythology are a famed example (Tuten 1982: 239; van Creveld 1992: 65). Some nations’ martial narratives imagine female military figureheads as symbolic warrior archetypes such as France’s Joan of Arc and England’s Queen Elizabeth II (Yuval-Davis 1997a: 95; Arnstein 1998). These examples are rare exceptions. From her review of the corpus of literature on the history of women’s military participation, Wilcox (2010: 69) concludes that the “near-monopoly men have had on war fighting throughout history” remains the dominant among her peers.
Military historians record the existence of women warriors during the post First World War era. Participation by such armed women on the frontline during warfare has been limited mostly to battles fought by militias and terrorist groups. For example, Sri Lankan Tamil resistance groups deployed armed women fighters against Sri Lanka’s National Armed Forces during their failed War of Independence between 1983 and 2010 (Jayatilleke 2010). Women’s contribution to engaging in frontline fighting roles in professional in their nation’s militaries has occurred in a minority of wars throughout the course of recorded history. Over the past century, they have played a central role in combat warfare in only a handful of instances, most of which occurred in regional tribes and armed militias (Tuten 1982: 238–239; van Creveld 1998).

During Israel’s War of Independence, the fledgling State of Israel deployed a limited number of women into armed combat duties, and these women worked mostly in intelligence gathering roles. The full details of women’s engagement in combat units in the Soviet armed forces during the First World War and Second World War are sketchy and contested. Historians and military narratives have tended to focus on these women’s femininity and have sexualised these women’s presence on the frontline and this has undermined the contributions these Russian female fighters made on the frontline (Buttsworth 2003: 38, 250). Furthermore, records do not capture the number of Russian women who fought on the frontline against the German Armed Forces and it is not clear if any of these women officially held combat status (Quinn and Toulson 1987: 3–4).

Defenders of the ADF’s GCP routinely refer to the notion of the near-universal cultural image of the all-male warrior to support their position. This approach to policy debate that highlights the theme of the warrior archetype portrays strong nationalistic
connotations. These individuals argue that women should not perform combat service, as this function is incompatible with their roles as supporters of men in the national project. These discussions are characterised by their brevity – the speaker takes for granted that their viewpoint requires no elaboration. The logic of this argument merely asserts that there are no compelling social reasons to feminise the social construction of the all-male warrior archetype. Supporters of the GCP argue that it is obvious the warrior is naturally an all-male role because virtually all nations and civilisations exclude women from combat service.

References to the warrior archetype appear in the ADF’s GCP documents published during each decade, between 1978 and 2000. These Reports make prominent their discussion of the influence exerted by cultural images by placing them in key sections and using headings and sub-headers to demarcate these passages of text. For example, under the heading “The Case Against Women in Combat” The Quinn and Toulson Report refers to the all-male armed “hunter” (Quinn and Toulson 1987: 6b). The hunter cultural archetype shares many similarities with the warrior (Yuval-Davis 2004: 170). Quinn and Toulson (1987: 6b) mention how the exclusion of women from combat service has been the norm in virtually all nations’ armed forces. The Quinn and Toulson Report makes prominent its discussion of the hunter archetype, commencing the section titled ‘The Case for Women in Combat’ with a statement that explores the influence the hunter–nurturer binary exerts over policy debates:

The proponents [who support the GCP] argue that in the past combat roles have, with very few exceptions, been exclusively the domain of male activity. The male stereotype is associated with hunting and aggression [my emphasis], and the female role is associated with that of nurturance of the young and support [my emphasis] (Quinn and Toulson 1987: 6b).
This citation above from The Quinn and Toulson Report is noteworthy as it explicitly portrays the hunter role as a masculine construction. Moreover, it portrays the hunter function as a cultural archetype that is the binary opposite of the nurturer, the supportive healer being a feminine archetype. I argue that the latent meaning the passage I cite above conveys to its audience is that gender roles exist as fixed binaries in the national project. Yuval-Davis (2004: 170) notes how the armed warrior and hunter roles are male-exclusive constructions because it is widely accepted that genetics and physiology favour men’s ability to hunt and kill animals for their people to consume. This passage of discussion uses text to explain how defenders of the GCP reinforce pre-existing archetypes that portray the hunter as a fixed gender role that is the binary opposite to the nurturer, which exists as a feminine social construction in the nation’s imagination.

The Quinn and Toulson Report is representative of the way the ADF’s GCP documents draw on nationalism themes to conceptualise the hunter/warrior role as an archetype that enjoys a prominent place in Australia’s national project. Quinn and Toulson (1987: 7) explore the history of the GCP by citing the argument put forward by Defence scholar David Marlowe (1983). He argues that the social construction of “maleness” for many men is “contingent upon his having proven himself as a warrior [my emphasis] in battle (Marlowe 1983: 191, cited in Quinn and Toulson 1987: 7).” This statement is indicative of how the ADF’s GCP refer to deeply entrenched social norms that portray women and men in fixed gender roles in the nation’s imagination.

These persistent references to the warrior archetype in the ADF’s GCP documents are an aberration as they defy my observation that these Reports gradually place less emphasis on defending fixed gender roles after 1987. This exceptional pattern is not surprising as
Defence research repeatedly confirms that the ADF’s warrior culture stubbornly persists. For example, commenting on The Broderick Report, Australia’s Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick concludes that the “warrior” culture continues to define the ADF’s organisational dynamics (Broderick in Snow 2012).

Australia’s Defence Minister commissioned The Broderick Report in response to the so-called ‘Skype Scandal’ that occurred at the ADFA in 2011. A male cadet used a hidden camera to record and broadcast a live stream of a sexual act he committed with a female cadet in his living quarters at the ADFA. This incident is of concern as it highlights the ways in which Australia’s civil–military gender gap persists and how the ADF seeks to conceal this gap by denying it exists (Wadham 2012: 12). The way in which ADFA’s leadership forced Officer Cadet ‘Kate’ to apologise for informing the media of this event is an example of how the ADF uses censorship as a means to preserve the civil–military gap (Wadham 2013: 8).

The objective of The Broderick Report seeks to identify the ways that Australia’s male Defence personnel seek to undermine the advancement and status of women, and its term-of-reference do not require Broderick to review the status of Australia’s GCP (Australian Human Rights Commissions 2012a; 2013). Broderick argues the male-centric character of the ADF’s warrior culture is a major factor that continues to impede the appointment of women into senior leadership roles in Australia’s military institution. In many cases, the marginalisation of women in this organisation persists solely because of their gender (Australian Human Rights Commission 2012: 164–215).
The Burton Report contains 27 references to the words ‘warrior/s’ (Burton 1996) and a sole reference to “hunter/gatherer ... [protected–] protector” binary (Burton 1996: 47). Burton’s discussion makes prominent the role played by the warrior archetype in her Report as she comments on this topic in her Executive Summary:

External pressure on women to alter their behaviour stems directly from the dominance of the masculine culture in which the ‘male warrior is the model of success’ [my emphasis] (Burton 1996: ES p. 17).

This discussion in The Burton Report cites qualitative interview data Burton collected from six male ADF personnel whose testimonies are representative of those provided by their colleagues. Burton does not identify them individually. These men explicitly argue that the ADF’s ‘warrior’ culture is a dominant factor that impedes the advancement of women in Australia’s military institution (e.g. Burton 1996: 98–99). The testimony provided by one naval officer is representative of how male ADF personnel argue that the ADF’s warrior culture undermines women’s ability to succeed in leadership roles, administrative roles and armed support roles. This sailor’s viewpoint is noteworthy as it reflects the way many male ADF personnel likewise argue that women do not understand military culture, yet do not offer specific details to explain why they hold this opinion. The testimony I cite below is typical of the manner in which other male ADF personnel defend the GCP by arguing that women will never realise warrior status in Australia’s military institution. These discussions are not embodied and do not refer to female biophysical competencies:

Our [ADF] culture doesn’t permit it [i.e. women warriors] to be otherwise, we are so wrapped up in the warrior [my emphasis] ethos. You [military women] do not understand the intricacies of war therefore you don’t understand about [military] management (Unidentified male naval officer in Burton, 1996: 129).”
In a similar vein to Burton (1996), Campbell (2000: 11) likewise makes prominent her discussion exploring how a warrior culture shapes organisational dynamics of the ADF’s combat units. The warrior culture fosters an attitude among combat personnel that the combat units are the natural preserve of men and that women have no right to enter this domain. Campbell (2000: 11) explores this issue under a bold font header titled “Warrior Culture”. In this section of her Report, Campbell argues that those personnel whose careers fit the pattern of the quintessential “warrior” are most likely to achieve regular promotions in the ADF. She also mentions that a dominant perception exists in the ADF that those personnel who enter the ADF at a “young” age, are employed in the armed forces “full time”, possess “an unbroken [military] career record” and show a dedicated work ethic towards the ADF are bestowed with the warrior status (Campbell 2000: 11). I make the point that male and female personnel may demonstrate all of these professional traits. The nuanced message Campbell (2000: 11) communicates to her audience is that men have a natural right to monopolise frontline warrior duties (combat roles) in Australia’s national Armed Forces. Moreover, female ADF personnel cannot emulate the warrior fighter because they possess female bodies and because women’s role in the national project is incompatible with the warrior, who is a professional killer.

**Beautiful souls**

Australia’s martial archetypes and narratives imagine the nation’s women as ‘beautiful souls’ (Inglis 1987). This feminine image depicts women as virginal, and their role during wartime is different to the duties the nation’s men perform. This archetype, the beautiful soul, portrays the nation’s females as pure, morally superior beings and is the binary opposite image of the warrior who is a killer. The beautiful soul–warrior binary is
a near-universal construct observed in most societies, nations and polities (Elshtain 1982). The way defenders of the GCP draw on this social construction provides an additional dimension to the argument that asserts that the role of female military personnel will never be compatible with the military’s warrior culture. The nationalistic archetype of the all-male warrior, a professional killer, is the opposite construction of the feminine image of the ‘beautiful soul’ who is a natural pacifist (Damousi and Lake 1992: 3).

The Catholic Cardinal George Pell’s defence of the GCP is representative of the way Australia’s media, ADF officers with combat experience and other elites in Australia’s civilian society support the GCP. Pell (2009: NP) seeks to preserve the way the warrior–beautiful soul exists as a fixed gender role binary in the nation’s imagination. When defending the GCP, he claims that men do not monopolise the warrior model of “violence” and “aggression”. Pell simultaneously argues that pacifist qualities – which are the opposite of aggression – exist as a dominantly feminine construct in the national imagination and that the state should not alter the male-exclusive character of this social construction by allowing women to serve as combat fighters. Pell makes these claims in a media statement, an extract of which I cite below. The core purpose of his communiqué criticises the public announcement issued by Defence Minister Stephen Smith reaffirms that in principle his Government supports the reversal of the ADF’s GCP by circa 2016:

Men have no monopoly on violence, aggression [my reference] and insensitivity, but young men particularly are streets ahead of women in this score. It’s nothing praiseworthy ... men are generally better equipped for fighting when the need arises than women. Likewise, women don’t have a franchise on peacemaking, negotiating and nurturing [my emphasis], but they clearly have more than a competitive advantage in these areas compared to men (Cardinal George Pell, Leader Sydney Diocese of the Catholic Church, 2009: NP).
The Cardinal’s defence of the GCP is representative of the way that male elites and some female elites stereotype the natural morality of women by imagining them as more likely than men to be agents for peace. These individuals argue Australia’s women should not perform combat by appealing to the way the nation’s cultural symbols portray them as ‘beautiful souls’. This notion of the feminine “beautiful soul” is a near-universal feminine archetype. The origins of the feminine beautiful soul are partially explained by the fact that women are the nation’s mothers, who are givers of life. The beautiful soul archetype highlights women’s reproductive capacities by appealing to the ingrained cultural stereotype that imagines women’s maternal instincts are incompatible with the role of the warrior who is a taker of life (Elshtain 1982).

Australian criminology data partially explains the popularity of stereotypes that imagine women as passive. Men were the perpetrators of approximately 80% of all murders recorded in Australia during the new millennium (ABS 2010). This data simultaneously challenges the essentialist notion that women are incapable of performing extreme acts of violence as this evidence shows that women committed around 20% of murders during this period. The nation’s symbols make women culturally subordinate to men by portraying them as objects of male protection. This construction of gender roles provides an additional explanation for why women are more passive than men (Stabile 2009).

The broader content of Pell’s press statement is noteworthy as the Cardinal also highlights the fear raised publicly by scholars (e.g. Carter 1996: 107) and others who support the GCP (e.g. Razer 1999) that the nation’s ‘beautiful souls’ might be conscripted to fight on the frontline, should the state reverse the ADF’s GCP. In this document, Pell asks his audience:
What happens if Australia reintroduces *conscription* [my emphasis] in the future? Obviously all draftees, men and women, could be sent to the front-line. What a *great victory for women’s rights that would be* [my emphasis; note Pell’s mocking tone and sardonic connotations] (Pell 2009: NP).

Pell’s reference to “women’s rights” his statement I cite above is representative of the way other defenders of the GCP reject the argument that the reversal of a GCP elevates women’s citizenship status and advances women’s rights and gender equality (*e.g.* Yuval-Davis 1997a: 94–95). As the Head of Australia’s Catholic Church, a quintessential patriarchal institution, I argue that the Cardinal engages in an act that Neuendorf (2002: 201, 205) terms “agenda-setting”. Pell (2009: NP) falsely portrays women’s citizenship status as elevated because overturning the GCP threatens to destabilise gender relations and the patriarchal order, which elevates male dominated institutions such as the Catholic Church.

In a similar vein to Pell (2009: NP), Australia’s patriarchal print media persistently stereotype Australian women as ‘beautiful souls’ to argue that they are unsuitable to assume the role of professional killer in the national imagination. This nationalist approach to debate is popular in Australia’s print media. The press sometimes uses imagery such as satirical caricatures sketched by professional media cartoonists to promote this argument. These cultural media persistently communicate a latent message that women are naturalised in pacifist roles that are supportive of men in Australia’s national project (*e.g.* Spurling 2000). By referring to representations of Australia’s martial images, Australia’s print media draw on unconscious cultural associations that prevail in the national psyche (*e.g.* Charteris-Black 2011: 22) and by doing so, replicate cultural images that essentialise women as peacemakers.
On 14 April 2011, News Limited published a caricature on www.news.com.au. This image was sketched by its principal cartoonist Peter Nicholson on the same day. This sketch responds to the media announcement made by Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Defence Minister Stephen Smith on 13 April 2011 that the Gillard Government supports the reversal of Australia’s GCP (Nicholson, B 2011; Wilson and Dodd 2011). This image defends the GCP using satire. News Corp is a complicit supporter of the GCP, placing this image on the home page of its flagship online news service. This caricature stereotypes the role of women as the nation’s ‘beautiful souls’ and by doing so, communicates a latent message to its audience that Australia’s women are morally superior to men and do not belong in the role of professional killer. Nicholson’s image shows two ADF combat casualties located in an unspecified urban warfare setting. His sketch embeds caricatures of Australia’s serving Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Defence Minister Stephen Smith. Nicholson portrays these Ministers as military medics bearing a stretcher as they sprint towards two bloodied unconscious/dead ADF combat personnel. One casualty is female and the other male. The text he embeds into this caricature states “gender equality at last” (Nicholson in News Limited 2011).

Figure One

Image Sketched by Nicholson

(Nicholson, P 2011)
The text Nicholson embeds into his image sardonically conveys a message that the death of the nation’s women, in the name of gender equality, is not a desirable outcome. Nicholson attacks the state, as represented by Gillard and Smith, for announcing its plans to annul the GCP and implement gender-neutral admission standards for combat duties. Nicholson’s caricature, above, is representative of the way images and articles which appear in Australia’s print media persistently focus on the tragedy of female combat casualties and fatalities when they chronicle policy developments that threaten to partially or fully reverse the ADF’s GCP. Such images portray female combat casualties/fatalities as a more tragic outcome than male combatant casualties/fatalities.

The core message of this sketch and text appeals to the nation to preserve the lives of its beautiful souls because women are morally superior to the atrocities of war. Warfare exists as a masculine construction in the nation’s imagination and this explains why the image of the feminised beautiful soul archetype is incompatible with frontline military service.

A news article written by Australian journalist Cameron Stewart (1992) is typical of the way Australia’s print media uses text to replicate pre-existing archetypes that portray its women as beautiful souls. Stewart’s story spans two pages in *The Weekend Australian* newspaper in 1992. This extended coverage is representative of the way Australia’s print media reports in detail major policy developments that partially reverse Australia’s GCP after circa 1988 and show a strong bias in favour of preserving the policy status quo. In the opening sentences of his article, Stewart cites a narrow passage from *Women in Battle* (Laffin 1967). Celebrated Australian war historian John Laffin is the author of this book, which explores women’s contribution to global armed warfare from the 15th Century until the Second World War. This scholar is renowned for his support for the...
preservation of traditional gender roles that exist in Australia’s armed forces (e.g. Goldstein 2014: NP). Laffin’s views are a product of this generation. For example, women’s participation in Australia’s armed forces during this period did not exceed 4% of total personnel between 1951 and 1977. Defence policy imposed a ceiling on female participation levels and this was capped at 4% of Australia’s military headcount (ADF 1999: NP).

By citing Laffin in the opening passage of his article, Stewart elevates this historian’s argument that the pacifist and life-bearing qualities of the nation’s women are incompatible with the role of the professional martial killer:

A woman’s place should be in the bed [my emphasis] and not on the battlefield. Wheeling a pram [my emphasis] rather than driving a tank. It should be the natural function of women to stop men from fighting [my emphasis] rather than aiding and abetting them in pursuing it (John Laffin, Women in Battle [1967], Quoted in Stewart 1992: 28).

Stewart cites the passage from Women in Battle that conveys the most patriarchal connotations this book contains (Goldstein 2014: NP). Stewart quotes Laffin’s references to “the natural function of women”. This text is explicit in referring to the way women are essentialised in the national imagination as natural pacifists (e.g. Elshtain 1982). Laffin’s choice of language explicitly supports a sexual division of military labour in the nation’s imagination, based at least in part on women’s ostensibly superior morality. This argument is evident from Laffin’s use of words that refer to women as the natural creators of life (his reference to “bed”) and nurturers of the nation’s children (his reference to “pram”). These textual themes refer to women’s life-bearing capacities. This citation implicitly suggests that Australia’s women are unsuitable to perform the binary
opposite role assumed by the all-male warrior, who is a taker of life in the national imagination (e.g. Elshtain 1982: 343).

**Woman warrior**

Other parts of Stewart’s article are typical of the way Australia’s print media and other male elites who support the GCP refer to the need to preserve the ANZAC myth as an all-male construct in the national imagination. Stewart contextualises the cultural image of the feminine beautiful soul with Australia’s national image of the all-male warrior, the ANZAC Digger. When defending the GCP, Stewart warns his readers that overturning the ADF’s GCP:

> tackles one of the last frontiers of *masculine tradition in Australia – the frontline soldier* [my emphasis] – and challenges the exclusively male image of the *ANZAC warrior* [my emphasis] which has played such a pivotal role in [Australia’s] national folklore (Cameron Stewart, The Australian 1992: 28).

Australia’s commercial print media rarely publishes articles that support the annulment of Australia’s GCP (e.g. Spurling 2000). This consistent pattern is strong evidence that Australia’s patriarchal media purposefully engages in “agenda-setting” (Neuendorf 2002: 205) to defend men’s elevated status in Australia’s military institution. Australia’s print media routinely parodies the notion of the woman warrior and imagines this nationalist military archetype as abnormal and undesirable (Spurling 2000: 88). To sell more newspapers, the print media sensationalises social developments that threaten to erode fixed gender roles in the nation’s institutions (Neuendorf 2002: 201–202). By belittling the image of a ‘woman warrior’, Australia’s print media conveys a latent message that it
supports the preservation of fixed gender roles that dominate Australia’s martial images and martial narratives such as the warrior–beautiful soul binary (Spurling 2000).

By ridiculing the partial feminisation of the warrior archetype, the media replicates the way Australia’s war images and narratives portray this role as a masculine social construction in the national imagination. An example of this style of reporting is evident in a feature story that appears in the *Sunday Telegraph* on 10 January 1999. This feature story spans two pages and explores the status of the GCP. This article responds to the public release of The Ferguson Report. The conclusions section of this ADF document provides in principle support for the integration of women into all combat roles except Infantry and Armour (Dunn 1998: 13; see Chapter Six). This policy announcement is of special significance, as the male-exclusive image of the combat warrior would erode if the ADF admitted women into the other roles that hold Direct Combat status, such as Armour.

This *Sunday Telegraph* article illustrates another way Australia’s print media vigorously challenges policy developments that partially reverse the GCP. A sub-heading in this article has the title: “Xena the Princess Warrior”. Discussion in this sub-section begins with a statement that Xena can battle any male opponent, and she “always wins the day, even against bigger, stronger male opponents” (Sunday Telegraph 1999). Some feminists argue that Xena’s cultural image empowers women and feminist causes as her creators portray her as a strong and victorious fighter who defeats men in hand-to-hand combat. This argument is simplistic and false. Xena is a “camp” and “drag queen” (Morreale 1998: NP) comedy character and her creators do not expect her to be taken seriously. Her warrior persona and behaviour is quintessentially male and Xena merely possesses a
female body (Morreale 1998). This portrayal of Xena in the Sunday Telegraph likewise parodies the image of the female warrior, and by doing so communicates a nuanced message that the state must uphold the GCP if Australia’s warrior legend is to be taken seriously (Spurling 2000: 87–88).

Australia’s mainstream newspapers routinely use variants of the term “women warrior” in their article headlines. The content of these stories mostly chronicle the gradual integration of women into combat-related roles between 1990 and 2005 (e.g. ADF 1999: NP; Kelly 2005). Table Seven below lists a representative sample of news article titles lifted from Factiva that report the integration of women into combat-related roles. This selection of evidence illustrates how references to the warrior theme are repetitious and they show a nuanced way in which Australia’s print media replicate the warrior archetype as a construction that is naturally masculine.

Table Seven
Sample of References to Warrior/s in News Article Titles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article title</th>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Edition date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. “Willing to be Warriors”</td>
<td>The Canberra Times</td>
<td>7 May 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. “Female Warriors Paved the Way”</td>
<td>Herald Sun</td>
<td>7 August 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. “No Case to Ban Women Warriors”</td>
<td>The Australian</td>
<td>22 January 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. “Women Warriors”</td>
<td>Sunday Mail</td>
<td>11 April 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. “New Directions for Female Warriors”</td>
<td>The Canberra Times</td>
<td>20 August 2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Factiva 2008)
The repeated inclusion of the words ‘Women Warriors’ and closely related variants of this term (e.g. ‘Female Warriors’) in the headline of these articles is not casual or coincidental. Australia’s print media purposefully elevates the cultural oxymoron of the female warrior to the forefront of their readers’ attention. This choice of language seeks to replicate the subordination of women to men in Australia’s national imagination. The warrior is a creator of history – the near perpetual exclusion of women from this cultural image and role elevates men’s status as action-makers in the nation’s collective consciousness (Lake 1992).

Another way Australia’s print media replicates the social construction of the exclusively masculine combat warrior in the national imagination is by publishing images that ridicule the idea that a female combat soldier is willing to kill the enemy. This theme appears in a sketch crafted by famed Australian artist Bruce Petty to portray this gender stereotype. This image appears in *The Age* on 29 January 1999. This image supports new stories that appear in response to the public release of The Ferguson Report.

**Figure Two**

*Image Sketched by Petty*

(Petty in *The Age* 1999)
Petty’s caricature shows an image of a senior male military officer interviewing a female ADF staff member who wishes to transfer into a combat role. This male officer asks this female the question: “would you accept maiming [the enemy], burning and massive head wounds but not actual killing?” (The Age 1999: 29) This cultural image and the text embedded within the sketch parodies the notion of a female warrior. This senior male officer blatantly belittles female military personnel as he suggests that women combatants have no intent to kill the enemy during warfare even though this is a core duty the combat fighter must be prepared to perform to defend their nation (e.g. Elshtain 1982: 343).

Buttsworth’s analysis of Australia’s war myths discusses the gap between romanticised national representations of war that mythologise the way men establish their masculinity in defence of the nation and the brutal reality of armed conflict (e.g. Buttsworth 2003: 1–2). I argue that these caricatures which appear in Australia’s print media, such as those created by Petty (in the Age 1999: 29) and Nicholson (2011) seek to arouse Australia’s national consciousness by reminding its civilian society that war is a violent and bloody act where one nation kills another nation’s military fighters and inflicts maximum carnage on their infrastructure. The way modern weapons such as fighter jets are glamorised conceals the truth of the horror and brutality of warfare. Political and military leaders transform armed conflict into desirable values and meanings such as ‘dying for the nation’, and this is another way they distort the real activity of war (Buttsworth 2003: 5–6).
5.5 Conclusion

Supporters of Australia’s GCP seek to replicate the masculine traditions of this nation’s Armed Forces because these customs parallel the sexual division of labour and cultural power that exists in Australia’s civilian society and its martial images and war narratives. There is an implicit gendered division of labour and power in producing the nation. Reversing the GCP poses broader implications that threaten to destabilise this deeply entrenched patriarchal order-of-power beyond Australia’s military institution. The feminisation of the warrior archetype could cause the symbolic emasculation of the nation. This cultural development might create an alternative national myth and paradigm that elevates the status of women in Australia’s collective consciousness.

My discussion in the next chapter demonstrates other ways supporters of the GCP argue the state must preserve fixed gender role binaries and I show how these discussions occur within a framework that bears strong similarities to what Foucault (1978: 143) terms a “bio-power” apparatus. Defenders of the GCP persistently seek to replicate social constructions such as ‘masculinity–femininity’ and the ‘front–rear’. Supporters of this regime argue that only the male body is physically able to perform combat duties. The true intention of these policy discussions seek to replicate entrenched social structures that subordinate women to men in Australia’s civilian society and military institution. In the next Chapter, I progress from debates that argue that women should not perform combat duties to contentions that centre on the notion women cannot perform combat duties. These policy accounts shift to biomedical science because it is no longer socially acceptable to argue that the state must enforce traditional gender roles that subordinate women to men in Australia’s civilian society and its military institution.
Chapter Six \hspace{1cm} Bio-power, bodies and binaries

The *prime question* [my emphasis] of course is whether *public acceptance* [my emphasis] would be given to the concept of women being employed in all arms and services of the Armed Services (M. Farrell, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet 1974: 1).

So our approach, strongly supported by the Chief of the Defence Force and the Service Chiefs, is if you’re a woman, and you are *physically, intellectually, psychologically capable* [my emphasis] of doing a task, then that [combat] task should not be excluded from you simply on the basis of your sex (Stephen Smith, Minister for Defence 2011: NP).

6.1 Bio-power and the body

The bio-politics of the gendered body is a dominant theme that supporters of Australia’s GCP refer to in the public domain. The voices of senior Federal Government Ministers and male ADF personnel are dominant in the evidence that defends Australia’s GCP from a bio-political perspective. These elites argue that the state must enforce a regulatory mechanism that bears core similarities to what Foucault (1978: 143) terms a “bio-power” regime the state enforces over its human population.

References to bio-performances of the gendered martial body persist in the ADF’s GCP documents. They also dominate other evidence I explore such as journal articles, media stories, interviews and public speeches. I use qualitative textual analysis techniques to review this data to identify manifest and latent themes supporters of the GCP communicate in the public domain. Supporters of the GCP routinely focus on the unique role the Armed Forces play as the defender of Australia’s sovereign territories. These discussions centre on the gap that exists between the average performances of male and female bodies when they perform in physically and mentally demanding military roles such as combat.
Section 6.2 establishes the dominant conceptual framework that underpins my analysis. The state regulates the individual martial body via various mechanisms. Foucault (1978: 139) labels these controls the “anatomo-politics of the human body”. This regime dovetails with the “bio-power” (Foucault 1978: 143) mechanism the state enforces over its human population (Feder 2007: 63). The executive upholds this apparatus in the armed forces to maximise the capacities of its combat fighters as the state has a duty to protect its human population from enemy attack.

Section 6.3 provides historical context. I establish the various ways the state enforces regulatory controls over gendered bodies in Australia’s civilian society and military institution. The ADF’s GCP is a specific case of a bio-political regime that the state imposes on gendered bodies in the military institution and I explore other examples in this chapter. The exclusion of women from combat roles as state policy features prominently in my analysis of the various controls the state enforces over reproductive female bodies. My discussion outlines the policy rationale that explains why the state and Australia’s Defence Executive support the bio-political regimes they enforce over gendered bodies in Australia’s military institution.

The state and Australia’s Defence Executive consistently argue that the female body is incapable of attaining the biophysical performance standards required of the competent combat fighter. In recent decades, these institutions have argued that Infantry and Armour are the two military units that must remain perpetually closed to women. Policy discussions that focus on Infantry and Armour defend the bio-power regime the state enforces in the military. Army fighting roles primarily engage the enemy face-to-face and provide the last line of defence for the nation. I examine specific parts and functions
of the female brain and the female body that supporters of the GCP argue are incapable of performing combat service at an acceptable standard.

Section 6.4 establishes the two principal ways supporters of the GCP defend patriarchal institutional structures in Australia’s civilian society and military institution, both of which centre on the lesser physical abilities of the female gendered body. Proponents of the GCP claim this policy is necessary because it replicates the protector–protected gender binary and this in turn automatically maximises the ADF’s combat effectiveness. Those who put forward this argument seek to replicate entrenched social norms that imagine women as weak and subordinate to men. They simultaneously imagine men as defenders of the nation’s women. Supporters of the GCP also seek to replicate cultural norms that portray men as natural leaders in professions that command power of life and death.

No prior study examines how or why supporters of the ADF’s GCP defend the biopolitical regime the state enforces in Australia’s armed forces. Journal articles authored by Annette Summers (1999: 9) and Kim Hosking (2003: 64–65) fleetingly note that this regime exists. This gap in the literature requires conceptualising because those who defer to bioscience to defend the GCP dominate contemporary debates. This approach is popular as supporters of this regime may cite objective quantifiable data to justify their claim that the female combat body is ‘unable’.

This chapter explores a new dimension to the way defenders of Australia’s GCP seek to preserve a patriarchal sexual division of labour and power in Australia’s armed forces and civilian society. The notion that the male body is ‘able’ and the female body is
‘unable’ is a partial cause of male dominance in institutions of national significance. Those who defend the bio-political regime the state enforces over the gendered martial body refers to a pre-existing discourse that is naturalised. These policy debates are rooted in manifestations that argue biology is destiny. Supporters of the GCP fear that overturning this regime will diminish male power.

Male elites dominate the evidence that centres on biology. This is partially because Defence and Government leaders have access to ADF medical data that measures the performance of the gendered martial body and because men dominate leadership positions in these institutions. Men as a whole also benefit from the prestige bestowed on the superior, ‘able’ male body and this explains why they vigorously defend their privileged status in the public domain.

6.2 Bio-power objective

Bio-power regime

The state regulates the gendered martial body in Australia’s armed forces and the systematic controls it enforces over women’s bodies in this institution are consistent with what Foucault (1978: 140) labels the state’s “bio-power” regime. The “subjugation of bodies” (Foucault 1978: 140) in the nation’s military institution is a regulatory method the state enforces over its military population. In order for the state to protect its society from internal conflict and external attack, it requires agencies that have the capacity to do this. The state constructs these institutions as masculine entities by exercising control over the gendered bodies it socialises (Hosking 2003: 64–65). The military and policing
institutions are classic examples of disciplinary agencies (Foucault 1978: 135–136; 141). The regulation of the martial combatant’s body is a central theme of Foucault’s theory of bio-power (Foucault 1978: 140). The frontline military fighter is a professional occupation Foucault identifies as exercising “power over life” (Foucault 1978: 139).

Foucault’s theory of bio-power does not focus on the bio-performance capacities of specific parts of the human anatomy. He also does not analyse biological performance differences between female and male bodies (e.g. Sawicki 1991), although he does mention that the female body is the bearer of life – a function the male body cannot achieve (e.g. Foucault 1978: 146–147). This limitation of Foucault’s theory of bio-power requires me to build on his model to theorise how and why the state regulates the gendered combat body. I complement Foucault’s analysis using interdisciplinary gender studies theory such as feminist analysis. Synthesising these literatures enables me to understand how and why the state creates and regulates what Foucault (1979: 179) labels “Docile Bodies” in Australia’s military institution. I explain why the state excludes women from Direct Combat duties and combat-related work categories using Foucault’s bio-regulatory framework and feminist analysis.

The notion of the ‘docile body’ underpins the bio-political regime the state enforces in its civilian society and its military institution (Foucault 1978: 139, 141). The docile body refers to the disciplined human anatomy. The state creates a docile martial body via the “administration of bodies” (Foucault 1978: 139–140). By enforcing various disciplinary regimes over the individual martial body, the state amplifies the efficiency and capability of the martial body and this in turn enhances the fighting capacities of the armed forces (Foucault 1979: 185–186). Policies that require military personnel to maintain minimum
physical standards for admission into combat service are an example of a disciplinary regime the state enforces over its military personnel. These disciplinary practices subordinate the martial body to the authority of the state – a process Foucault (1978: 140) terms the “subjugation of bodies”.

Those who defend the subjugation of the female martial body communicate two dominant messages. The first message is that the female body can never be suitable for certain military roles because of its unique anatomical design – such as women’s birth-giving capacities (e.g. Summers, A 1999: 9). The second theme is that the disciplinary practices the state enforces over the martial body will rarely or never transform the individual female military body to reach the standards required of the ‘disciplined’ combat fighter (e.g. Hosking 2003: 65, 68).

Reference to women’s unique anatomical design is explicit in a document co-published by Ryebuck Media and the ADF in 2002. This brochure celebrates women’s historical contribution to Australia’s armed forces. The concluding section of this document explores the dominant reasons defenders of the GCP put forward to justify their support for this regime. Ryebuck Media and ADF (2002: 14) mention how some supporters of the GCP cite the female hygiene issue (i.e. menstruation in the field) as a factor that legitimises the exclusion of women from combat service. This section illustrates the argument with a question and answer quiz that asks its readers a question and matches this question to a response listed in the answers section that mentions female menstruation is a problem that might occur on a combat mission:

Are there special problems with feminine hygiene [my emphasis] in the field? Women are more susceptible to infections after long periods in the field with primitive conditions (Ryebuck Media and ADF 2002: 14).
I use Foucault’s theory of bio-power to conceptualise the underlying reasons that explain why supporters of the GCP have persistently argued that it is problematic for the state to deploy the ‘undisciplined’ female body and mind into combat service during live warfare. The dominant theme that features in these policy debates is the argument that female combat body is much weaker than the male combat body and that the appointment of female combat personnel therefore automatically diminishes the ADF’s frontline fighting capacity. Deploying the inferior female body into frontline military operations undermines the state’s capacity to protect its national population from attack against a superior all-male fighting force (e.g. Hosking 2003: 64–65).

**Survival**

The ADF’s GCP documents remind its audience that Australia’s frontline military fighters are the ultimate protectors of their population. They further argue that the state must never annul the bio-political regime it enforces over the gendered combat body, as this would pose dire risks to the survival of its population. A popular theme that recurs within this ‘survival’ argument is reference to the fact that Australia’s potential military adversaries maintain an all-male combat military force. The Quinn and Toulson Report is representative of the way these policy documents frame the survival argument this way, when they state that the “use of women in combat would be interpreted as a sign of physical weakness [my emphasis] by the enemy” (Quinn and Toulson 1987: 6b). These military officers make prominent their discussion of “physical weakness” as their policy account explores this factor as the “first major argument” under a major header titled “The Case Against Women in Combat” (Quinn and Toulson 1987: 6b). This section in The Quinn and Toulson Report that outlines the “first major argument” in fact discusses
three partially interrelated themes that underpin combat performance. These topics are “tradition, effectiveness and military cohesion (Quinn and Toulson 1987: 6b).”

These policy discussions that centre on “physical weakness” refer to two issues that few Defence commentators dispute. The first relates to the inferior biophysical performances of the female martial body. The average female martial body has reduced operational capacities compared to the average male martial body. Defence scientists in western nations such as the United States and Canada established these differences between the capacities of gendered martial bodies prior to the 1987 publication of The Quinn and Toulson Report (e.g. Castle 1978: 119; Park 1984). The second issue concerns the historical fact that no national military force allowed women unrestricted access to all combat-classified military roles in 1987. If Australia and other TTCP member nations had appointed female combat personnel in 1987, this might have reduced the strength of their combat units on a *per capita* basis, relative to other nations’ militaries who maintain all-male combat units (e.g. Quinn and Toulson 1987: 6b).

The ADF’s GCP documents argue that the state to preserve a regime that bears the hallmark characteristics of what Foucault (1978: 139) terms the state’s “bio-power” regulation of the human population. These documents focus strongly on the need to exclude women from those combat roles in the Australian Army that provide the last line of defence against enemy attack, Infantry and Armour. Foucault’s theory of bio-power likewise focuses on the central role the Army frontline fighter plays as the ultimate defender of the nation. He argues that the “formidable infantry of army” provides a “wall or a fortress” (Foucault 1979: 162). These Army fighters provide the nation’s last line of defence and this explains why it is imperative that the state manages its bio-political
regime in a manner that keeps the “individual [infantryman] useful” (Foucault 1979: 162). As argued by Foucault (1978: 137), by disciplining the individual Infantryman’s body, the state ensures it may be “capable of killing in order” for the population “to go on living”.

The Ferguson Report argues that the ADF must never appoint women into Direct Combat roles in its Infantry and Armour Corps. This Report expresses support in principle for women entering the other six combat occupations closed to women in 1998 (e.g. Combat Engineers) if they can meet biophysical entry standards. This discussion occurs in the opening paragraph of the Conclusions section of this Report. This section raises the prominence of this passage of text by using the title, in upper case characters, “COMBAT TRADES NOT SUITABLE FOR WOMEN [original emphasis] (Dunn 1998: 13).” The Ferguson Report commences its discussion under this header with the following argument that centres on the biophysical capacities of the gendered combat body:

From an equity point of view, provided that employment competencies [my emphasis] are met, there seems to be no reason to exclude women from any ADF employment. However, the physical demands [my emphasis] and the ADF environment of close combat, particularly the potential for hand-to-hand [my emphasis] engagement, argues against admitting women in those [Infantry and Armour] areas. Given that armour and infantry [my emphasis] have a primary role requiring them to “close with and kill the enemy” and taking into account the hand-to-hand and physical demands this requires [my emphasis], it is considered appropriate to continue to exclude women from these areas (Dunn 1998: 13).

In a similar vein to the ADF’s GCP documents, political elites also focus on the need to maximise the physical fighting capacities of those combat roles in the Australian Army whose primary duty is to engage the enemy face-to-face in the field. This is evident in David Anderson’s policy account to the Australian Parliament of the multiple rationales that explain why the Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Committee commissioned The
Ferguson Report. In a Defence policy research document he tables before this Parliament, Anderson (1997: NP) merely lists Naval Clearance Divers (RAN), Air Defence Guards (RAAF) and Ground Defence Officers (RAAF) as Direct Combat roles that remain closed to women. This reference occurs on one occasion (Anderson 1997: NP). Anderson’s extended discussion across pages 95 to 101 repeatedly centres on justifying the exclusion of women from Land Army Combat roles, as evident from this extract of his Report:

> The bulk of the [combat-classified] positions are closed in the [Australian] Army [my emphasis], and a good portion of these are **infantry, requiring strength, and endurance** [my emphasis], e.g. the capacity to carry a 27 kg [kilogram] pack (David Anderson, Chair Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Committee 1997: NP).

Anderson’s (1997: 101) discussion I cite above bears hallmark references to the state’s duty to uphold the bio-regulatory regime it enforces over individual bodies. For example, he mentions that a role of the Executive is to maximise the docility of the individual combat body in the ADF’s Land Army units. His discussion centres on the anatomy of the combat fighter, as evident when Anderson (1997: NP) argues that it is imperative Australia’s armed forces maximise the “strength” and “endurance” performances of the Infantry fighter and other Land Army combat fighters who carry a backpack when deployed in the field.

Supporters of the GCP persistently argue that it is critical that the state enforces the GCP in Australia’s Land Army service. This theme is most popular among serving and retired ADF commissioned officers, especially those with combat status. In 1992, the incumbent Chief of the ADF’s General Staff, Lieutenant General John Grey, limits his defence of the GCP to fighting roles closed to women in the Australian Army. Grey (1992: 12) states that Australia’s Land Army provides the nation’s last line of defence. Grey argues
that it is imperative Australia’s armed forces preserve their GCP in the *Pacific Defence Reporter* and informs his audience:

I’ve got a small *Army* [my emphasis] with an enormous task for the protection of Australia [my emphasis]. What I need is to have maximum ability to use my total force to achieve the maximum combat power I can get ... so I want the best flexibility, the toughest soldiers [my emphasis], and the toughness has got to be mental and physical [my emphasis] (Lieutenant General John Grey, ADF Chief of the General Staff in Hurst 1992: 12).

Grey’s policy discussion occurs at the time the ADF integrated women into a range of combat-related roles in the RAN and RAAF for the first time. Grey (1992: 12) only defends the need to exclude women from serving as combat personnel in the Australian Army. This narrow focus is noteworthy as in 1992 Australia’s Air Corps and Naval Corps excluded women from engaging the enemy in combat roles whose primary purpose is to fight the enemy face-to-face, such as Air Defence Guards (e.g. ADF 1994). Grey’s discussion above implicitly defends the disciplinary biophysical regime the state imposes on the individual martial bodies to argue that female military personnel who serve in Australia’s Land Army cannot meet the biophysical competency standards required of combat “soldiers” (Grey 1992: 12). He appeals to the state to preserve a policy regime that seeks to defend the survival of the national population, as evident from his reference, cited above, to the way the Army is the military service that guarantees “the protection of Australia”.

**Hysterization**

Historically, the state regulates women’s reproductive bodies in combat and non-combat classified roles. These controls are one of many policy mechanisms the executive enforces in its civilian society and military institution to ensure the survival of its population. The state enacts laws that impose controls over the individual female
gendered body to uphold its bio-power regime. These pieces of legislation regulate the female reproductive body and women’s sexual practices. For example, Australia’s Federal Parliament and its state/territory parliaments have enacted laws that restrict women’s rights to access contraception and terminate their pregnancy. Traditionally the state naturalises women’s roles as creators of life to justify the controls it imposes on the female reproductive body (Sawicki 1991: 82–84; Damousi 1992: 366). Foucault (1978: 146, 151, 153) argues that the state’s desire to protect the lives of its human population, including the unborn child, is the dominant rationale that justifies the bio-regulatory regime it enforces over women’s fertility and sexual practices. Foucault (1978: 146–147) labels these controls the “hysterization” of women:

*hysterization* [my emphasis] of women, which involved a thorough medicalization of their bodies and their sex, was carried out [by the state] in the name of the responsibility they owed to the health of their children, the solidity of the family institution, and the safeguarding of society.

By regulating women’s “reproductive functions” and “sexuality” (Foucault 1978: 151) the state protects the “management of life rather than the menace of death” to ensure the “future of the [human] species” (Foucault 1978: 147). The feminist literature adds a new dimension to my analysis and enables me to gain a more complete account of why the state enforces a hysterization regime in the military institution. Feminist scholars argue that the regulation of the reproductive body is a key component of a broader range of controls the state enforces over women’s bodies to uphold the patriarchal order that elevates men and subordinates women in the nation’s economy and society. The hysterization of the fertile female body diminishes women’s ability to fully control their bodies and exercise agency over their place in society. This explains why the state and male elites invest much energy in problematising and regulating women’s reproductive capacities in the Australia’s most powerful public institution (Hancock 1993: 90, 98).
Assessing female military personnel’s docility based primarily on their “reproductive functions” results in the process of “hysterization” – an outcome that “reduced them [ADF military women] to nothing but wombs (Summers, A 1999: 10).” The state justifies the restrictions it enforces on women’s right to participate in a range of military support duties by arguing that the anatomical design and performance of the female body is incompatible with the biophysical demands required of those who engage in these occupations. Moreover, the state argues that medical interventions such as surgery cannot groom the female martial body into a docile combat fighter.

The state enforces its hysterization regime over women who work in roles that expose the foetus to embryo-toxic spray-paint fumes. Section 31 of the Sex Discrimination Act allows any person or institution to discriminate against women in cases where concerns about “Pregnancy or Childbirth” are legitimate factors that justify treating fertile or pregnant women differently from men and other women who cannot bear children (Attorney General’s Department 1984a: NP; ADF 1986: 2). ADF Occupational Health and Safety Policy Guidelines authorises the ADF to exclude women from working as Surface Finishers and Electroplaters in the RAAF at its discretion (Australian Human Rights Commission 2012a: 431). The ADF has never hired women in spray-painting work roles in the RAAF. Defence and government policy documents state that the desire to protect the unborn foetus is the rationale that has justified the mandatory exclusion of women from working in embryo-toxic roles (Anderson 1997: NP; Holden and Tanner 2001: 15).

The disciplinary practices the state enforces over the female body are more restrictive in Australia’s armed forces than those controls it imposes on women in Australia’s civilian
society (e.g. Smart 1998; Summers, A 1999). The policy differences between the civilian society and the military institution are further evidence that a civil–military gender gap persists in Australia, although this gap is narrowing over time.

The exclusion of women from embryo-toxic work roles is one example of the hysterization of the female reproductive body that occurs in Australia’s armed forces but not in other public institutions. Prior to 1998, the RAAF also excluded all female personnel from flying as navigators and pilots in supersonic jets. According to RAAF Senior Medical Officer Group Captain Tracey Smart (1998), the RAAF claimed that it could not procure so-called “piddle [urinary collection] packs” (Smart 1998: 7) that could fit the unique shape of female genitalia. The RAAF stated that its inability to obtain these supplies for female personnel was as a partial reason that justified the exclusion of women from piloting and navigating supersonic jets. I argue an mindset that believes the sexual design of the female body is incompatible with physically demanding military roles is at least a partial factor that accounted for the enforcement of this defunct policy. Given the advanced technological designs of the modern fighter jet, it is difficult to accept that the ADF could not procure or design improvised urinary collection devices suitable for its female personnel. The ADF reversed this ban on women flying in supersonic jets in 1998 and the RAAF has been able to accommodate female urinary collection on-board supersonic jets since opening these roles to female personnel (e.g. Smart 1998: 1, 7; 2003).

The hysterization of the female gendered body persists in the ADF (e.g. Burton 1996: Chapter IV and VI; McConachie 2000). For example, current ADF policy document titled “Health Directive 235: Management of Pregnant Members of the Australian
Defence Force” imposes multiple restrictions on pregnant women’s right to participate in various flying activities in the RAAF. These restrictions depend on the women’s occupational role and their stage of pregnancy. The ADF justifies the enforcement of this policy by arguing that it protects the foetus (ADF 1998). Obstetrician and gynaecologist, Lieutenant Commander (RAN) Michael O’Connor, claims that medical science has never proven damage to the foetus may occur if pregnant women engage in those flying activities that remain closed to pregnant female ADF personnel (O’Connor 1999). This surgeon’s testimony occurs in a journal article in the *Australian Defence Force Journal* after the public release of The Ferguson Report. His expert bio-medical research contradicts official Defence explanations. O’Connor’s scholarly research supports the argument proposed by other ADF medical personnel such as Dr Annette Summers (1999: 9–10) who claim that the hysterization of the female martial body occurs in the ADF because the state wishes to protect its human population from declining.

The Quinn and Toulson Report is the only GCP document that explicitly poses the argument that women must remain excluded from combat service because their reproductive capacities ensure the survival of Australia’s population. Quinn and Toulson (1987: 6b) make prominent their discussion of reproductive factors in their policy account. These officers explore this theme as the concluding paragraph in the section of their Report that explores the first “major argument” why the state restricts women from engaging as combat personnel. In this sub-section of their Report, Quinn and Toulson (1987: 6b) justify the enforcement of the GCP in a manner that bears the hallmarks characteristics of the bio-power regime the state enforces over its human population. This Report discusses the risk that the nation’s population may decline significantly if
too many female combat personnel die on the frontline. To strengthen this argument, these military officers cite Gilder (1979: 29) who argues:

“… the ancient tradition against the use of women in combat [my emphasis] embodies the deepest wisdom of the human race. It expresses the basic imperatives of group survival [my emphasis]; a nation or tribe that allows the loss of large numbers of its young women runs the risk of becoming permanently depopulated [my emphasis] (Gilder 1979: 29, cited in Quinn and Toulson 1987: 6b).”

Senior ADF personnel argue that the hysterization of the female martial body is a strong factor that explains why the ADF excludes women from working in a range of military activities, including combat roles. These testimonies are credible, as these officers hold medical qualifications, work as medical officers in Australia’s armed forces and have access to ADF data. For example, ADF senior nurse and midwife, Colonel (Australian Army) Annette Summers PhD explores the history of the ADF’s GCP from a biomedical perspective in the Australian Defence Force Journal. Her discussion takes place after the ADF publicly announced the recommendations of The Ferguson Report. Summers’s use of the word “allegedly” challenges the way the state enforces the GCP as a legitimate form of discrimination, a form of hysterization designed to protect the survival of the population. She informs her audience that the enforcement of the GCP persists because:

The suitability of women to participate fully in military service continues to be argued [within Defence] mostly [my emphasis] on the basis of reproductive and gynaecological issues [my emphasis], and the impact these allegedly [my emphasis] have on women’s role in military service (Summers, A 1999: 9).

Summers’s statement above appears as the first bullet point in her summary text box titled “Synopsis” and this discussion appears on the first page of her article (Summers, A 1999: 9). This placement elevates her argument about hysterization as central to her research findings and conclusions. Defence psychologist Major (Australian Army) Lidia
Nemitschenko’s scholarly discussion of the Australia’s GCP occurs after ADF released the findings of The Campbell Report to the public. She directly challenges the legitimacy of the state enforcing the GCP partially because of its concerns about women’s reproductive capacities. Nemitschenko (2001: 39) challenges the misconception that prevails among Defence policy makers that:

the loss of numbers of males is less damaging than equal numbers of females ... given the problems of global overpopulation, maintaining population levels may not be an issue.

Brigadier (Australian Army, Retired) Alf Garland’s public defence of the GCP illustrates how senior Defence leaders with current and prior combat service argued that women are not suitable for combat service due to their reproductive capacities. The Weekend Australian courts and publishes Garland’s opinion in his capacity as National President of the RSL. During his interview, Garland informs staff journalist Cameron Stewart:

*Women are the future of the nation* [my emphasis] – we have to make sure that our women are looked after and I would never like to see women do what I had to do [i.e. fight on the frontline] (Brigadier [Australian Army] Alf Garland, RSL National President in Stewart 1992: 19).

Garland’s discussion of the GCP appears in a feature article in *The Weekend Australian* shortly after the ADF opened armed combat-support roles to women in the RAN and RAAF. For many conservative Defence personnel such as Brigadier Garland, this policy development violates a deeply entrenched gendered order in the military institution, where women’s bodies and military roles are naturalised as incompatible with armed military roles that may kill the enemy during warfare.
Essentialism

The various regulations the ADF enforces over the sexual and reproductive female body upholds support for a belief in ‘biological essentialism’ – the notion that biology is destiny. The possession of a female body automatically limits women’s ability to engage in all roles in the ADF although the possession of a male body imposes no limits on men’s military service (Butsworth 2003: 34, 124–125).

The sex organs are the distinguishing features of male and female bodies. The female body has “labia” and a “clitoris” and the male body has a “penis” and “scrotum” (Connell 2009: 52). Those who problematise differences between men’s and women’s sexual organs and childbearing capacities highlight the notion of “reproductive difference” (Connell 2009: 50). They simultaneously draw attention to the way society essentialises the functions and performances of the gendered body (Connell 2009: 50–51). Reproductive difference is one of most obvious biophysical distinctions between male and female bodies. Most adult female women may give birth, whereas this feat is biologically impossible for the male body to achieve (Connell 2009: 51).

Supporters of the GCP model the reproductive body as inferior to the performance to the male body and by doing so argue the state must replicate the patriarchal bio-power regime it enforces over the gendered reproductive martial body. The broader character of this mechanism defenders of the GCP seek to preserve bears the hallmark characteristics of what Foucault (1978: 139) labels the “anatomo-politics of the human body”. These elites persistently highlight differences between the performances of specific body parts.
of the gendered anatomy to defend the *status quo* of gender politics in Australia’s military institution.

### 6.3 Anatomo politics

The “anatomo-politics” of the body centres on the “body as a machine” and two poles comprise this regime (Foucault 1978: 139). The state disciplines the individual body to maximise its efficiency and productivity (Foucault 1978: 139) when it performs in key agencies of power, including “institutions such as the army” (Foucault 1978: 140–141). These controls include legislation and government policy and regulations the sovereign state may enforce to subjugate the docile body in security institutions that protect the survival of the executive and its population (De Larrinaga and Doucet 2008). The state integrates disciplined bodies into efficient systems and structures to maximise the collective utility of individual docile bodies (Foucault 1978: 139).

Supporters of the ADF’s GCP persistently argue that the state must enforce this regime because the average female martial body has lesser physical and mental capacities than does the average male martial body. This section shows how these policy discussions refer to the inferior performances of specific parts of the female anatomy when it engages in military duties that impose gruelling physical and mental demands on the body. Foucault (1978: 139) labels the regime the state enforces over individuals bodies the “anatomo politics of the human body.”

Supporters of the GCP seek to maximise the optimal performance of the combat body, so that the disciplined martial fighter may function in the most efficient manner possible, a
term Foucault (1978: 139) labels “the body as a machine”. The goal of this regime is to create a docile combat body that can achieve its full potential as a competent fighter. This in turn maximises the ADF’s ability to repel and defeat an enemy military force. The state upholds this regime over the individual martial body to protect its human population and sovereign territory. This connection between the state’s regulation of bodies and populations illustrates how Foucault’s theory of the anatomo-politics of the human body and his bio-power model “dovetail” (Feder 2007: 63) and pursue overlapping objectives.

Supporters of the GCP who problematise the below average abilities of the female martial body and mind rarely acknowledge the continuum of performances of the gendered martial body and mind. These discussions therefore stereotype the capacities of the gendered body. Those who diminish the performance of the average female body rarely acknowledge that scientific Defence research proves that some women may attain biophysical combat entry standards (e.g. Patterson et al. 2005). The subtexts of these discussions are suggestive of a viewpoint that purposefully imagines that all female martial bodies are unable and male martial bodies are able by appealing to a discourse that is already naturalised (e.g. Summers, A 1999: 9–10).

The Ferguson Report is representative of the way the ADF’s GCP documents diminish the performance capacities of the female anatomy by negatively stereotyping the way women’s bodies perform when they engage in physically demanding military roles. For example, Dunn’s use of the words “only”, “their”, and “always” in the extract citation I present immediately below suggests that all female heart rates demonstrate the same (inferior) performance capacities during military testing. Dunn (1998: 7) explores the
argument that the female martial body is not fit to perform gruelling military tasks such as combat. He makes this reference to physiology explicit. This section of discussion takes place under a 29-word header titled: “Women have a lower physical capacity than men for combat employment and it is believed that this physiological fact would prevent them from reaching existing standards and competency requirements”.

Under this heading, he defends the enforcement of the GCP by arguing:

Since the only way to increase their cardiac output is to increase their heart rate, women undergoing physical activity are always operating at a level closer to their maximum than men. Therefore they will reach exhaustion sooner (Dunn 1998: 7).

Connell et al. (1989: 7) and Yuval-Davis (1997: 114) cite the popular ‘Margaret Thatcher’ metaphor to illustrate that a female may possess the temperament and emotional strength required to lead a combat force into battle and defeat a formidable enemy. As Prime Minister and Chief Commander of the powerful British Military, Lady Thatcher guided Britain to a decisive victory over Argentina’s Armed Forces in the Falklands War during 1982. Thatcher demonstrated the mental capacities required of the docile Defence leader.

Regulating minds

Supporters of the GCP routinely diminish the performance of the female martial brain. Men with ADF combat service dominate these debates, and they argue that women do not have the psychological capacities required of the docile combat fighter. The character of these discussions contend that the state to preserve the bio-regulatory regime it enforces over the individual gendered combat body. The brain is an organ of the human
anatomy that regulates all functions performed by the human body. Traditionally popular accounts of differences between gendered bodies exaggerate distinctions between the structure and functional performances of the male brain and female brain as a means to distinguish gendered reproductive bodies (Connell 2009: 52). Such stereotypes offer nuanced support to preserve the status quo of gender relations because they draw on deeply ingrained stereotypes of the way the gendered form is socially embodied.

The ADF’s GCP documents routinely argue that the female martial mind cannot reach the minimum standards required of the docile combat fighter (e.g. Australian Army 1978a: 36). These discussions replicate existing gender stereotypes as they refer to average bio-medical performance data to explore themes such as the ‘typical’ female psychological profile. This mythical ‘regular’ woman is imagined as mentally weaker than the average man. These Reports explore the argument that no or few women possess the mental strength, mental stability and temperament required to perform combat service to an acceptable standard. These consistent references to female psychology and women’s mental resilience over an extended period, from 1978 (e.g. Thomas 1978: 43) to 2000 (e.g. Campbell 2000: 17–20), demonstrate the central role this biophysical factor plays in Defence accounts of the GCP.

The Campbell Report is an example of how the ADF’s GCP documents gradually shift their discussions after 1987 towards the argument that women cannot perform combat. By naming this policy document “Employment of Women in the Combat Arms: Demographic, Sociological and Psychological [my emphasis] Considerations” Campbell (2000: i) brings female psychology issues to the forefront of her policy discussion.
Two themes that concern women’s psychological profiles dominate the ADF’s GCP documents. The first issue is the stereotype that few women possess the mental capacities that enable them to cope with the trauma that the combat fighter normally experiences during live warfare on the frontline. These policy documents explore the ADF’s concerns that most or all female combatants will break down mentally once they witness the atrocities of frontline warfare. Discussions centre on the argument that the problem of mental breakdowns occurs on a much smaller scale among male personnel who engage in frontline warfare. The RODC Report explores female psychology factors and does not elevate this discussion, and this pattern is typical of the GCP documents published prior to The Burton Report. The Australian Army first examines gendered psychology issues deep into Chapter 6 of this document in a four-sentence paragraph that has the sub-title “Temperament Differences”. In this passage, the Australian Army negatively stereotypes the mental performance of “women in general” and argues that it is unlikely that women can cope in stressful situations such as warfare, whereas male combat personnel can:

There is some doubt as to the ability of women in general [my emphasis] to handle highly stressed military situations, in particular in the offensive environment of combat (Australian Army 1978a: Chapter pp. 6–11).

The Burton Report is representative of the way the GCP documents published after 1987 make more prominent their discussions of how the inferior performance of the female mind and body influences the enforcement of the GCP. For example, Burton includes a dedicated section in her Report titled “Women’s lesser overall physical capacity” (Burton 1996: 87). Furthermore, discussions related to female physical and mental competencies appear in all seven chapters of The Burton Report (Burton 1996: pp. ES-1 to pp. 205), especially in Chapter Five which has the title “Personnel Policies and
Practices in Need of Review” (1996: 100–161). Burton (1996) mentions how stereotypes that imagine women’s emotional makeup as ‘fragile’ are among the most popular reasons ADF personnel cite to justify their support for the exclusion of women from engaging in live warfare on the frontline. Burton (1996: ES p. 7) elevates this psychological factor as central to policy discussion as she discusses this issue in her Executive Summary. She states that negative perceptions about women’s mental abilities are a dominant barrier women face in the ADF:

The other most frequently mentioned [my emphasis] reasons [cited by ADF personnel to justify the GCP] include women’s capacity [my emphasis]; a theme returned to in Chapter 5; the fact that women’s emotional and psychological make up does not equip them for involvement in war [my emphasis].

The second dominant theme that recurs in the ADF’s GCP documents concerning women’s inferior mental capacities is the argument that female personnel cannot demonstrate the aggression levels required of the docile combat fighter during live warfare. References to female aggression levels also become more central to policy discussion in those GCP documents published after The Quinn and Toulson Report. For example, The RODC Report Part A only briefly refers to female aggression levels. This occurs in one paragraph on page 36 of this 141-page Report that explores the issues that restrict women’s service conditions. This discussion occurs under a prominent part of this report that has the upper case title “ARMY EFFECTIVENESS”. In this narrow passage, the Australian Army expresses reservations concerning “temperament differences” between male and female Army personnel. This Report briefly states: “There is also some suggestion that men are more aggressive than women (Australian Army 1978a: 36).”
In contrast to The RODC Report Part A, The Campbell Report is representative of how the ADF’s GCP documents examine the issue of female ‘aggression’ in more detail after 1987. Her discussion of women’s inferior aggression levels spans four pages and nine paragraphs of this Report. Campbell explores the argument that men’s higher aggression levels make them better suited to the brutal demands of combat service. Her extended analysis of issues concerning female aggression is representative of how the ADF’s GCP documents cite average gendered quantitative bio-performance data to portray female personnel’s psychological profiles as *unable*. The ADF’s GCP documents published after 1987 justify the exclusion of women from combat service by negatively stereotyping average female aggression levels as being significantly inferior to average male aggression levels. An example of this occurs in The Campbell Report under the sectional header titled “Aggression”:

Studies of aggression note gender differences, but 30% of women [scientifically tested] fall above the mean in measures of aggression and 30% of men fall below the mean (Campbell 2000: 12).

This reference to quantitative bio-performance data is consistent with Foucault’s (1978: 145–146) argument that deferral to medical testing of the body is a feature that characterises the state’s disciplined bio-regulation of the docile martial body.

Government Ministers and ADF personnel also cite women’s lower aggression and mental strength levels as reasons that justify the state enforcing the GCP. Policy discussions that diminish the performance of female mental capacities also became more prominent over time as public debates shift away from the argument that women should not perform combat service. For example, Department of Defence Naval Officer M. J. Castle’s 14-page journal article provides a comprehensive account of the various factors
that justify the enforcement of Australia’s GCP. These reasons include the social and cultural factors I explored in the previous Chapter from a nationalistic perspective. Castle’s discussion of female psychology arguments occurs in one paragraph on page 121 of his journal article. In this passage, Castle (1978: 121) states “female [military personnel] report more than males that their behaviour is influenced by tendencies to be fearful and anxious.” These references to ‘anxiety’ and ‘fear’ relate to two psychological traits that are the opposite of ‘aggression’ (Castle 1978: 121).

Wing Commander (RAAF) Amanda Goyne published her review of Australia’s GCP in 2003 and her account focuses exclusively on how women’s inferior psychological capacities justify excluding women from combat service. Her contemporary account of the GCP is representative of the way supporters of this regime have shifted their focus overwhelmingly to the inferior bio-performance of the female body and mind to defend their position. Goyne’s comprehensive 15-page account of the GCP occurs in book chapter titled “Stress Resilience and Combat. Should Gender be an Issue?” In contrast to Castle’s article that briefly examines gendered psychology themes, Goyne’s bio-medical account of the GCP focuses exclusively on the gap between the performances of male and female stress levels and related mental conditions such as neuroses and anxiety (Goyne 2003).

Goyne’s policy account informs her readers that medical research that compares male and female psychological performance provides evidence women are unsuitable for combat service because their psychological profile is generally unsuitable for the extreme demands of combat service (Goyne 2003). Goyne is a Department of Defence psychologist and she applies her professional training to analyse a range of clinical data
collated from multiple independent bioscience studies to support her arguments. According to Foucault (1978: 139) “medical or psychological examinations” over the body is a defining feature of the state’s disciplinary practices enforced over the body and populations. Moreover, he argues that the state shows a strong interest in measuring “the performances of the [gendered] body” (Foucault 1978: 139) because it uses this regime to delegate authority to those individuals/groups who may exercise power of life and death. Goyne’s policy discussion defers to medical science to justify the state enforcing the GCP. Her scholarship defends a system that bears the hallmark traits of a regime that Foucault (1978: 139) terms the “anatomo-politics” of the disciplined body.

Goyne’s policy account cites other quantitative bio-medical data to explain why defenders of the GCP argue that the inferior mental capacities of female military personnel render them unable to function as docile combat fighters. For example, Goyne (2003: 90–91) reports that women are 4.39 times more likely than are men to develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder if they are involved in a minor motor vehicle accident. The textual discussion in Goyne’s bio-medical account of the GCP makes subtle connections between the performances of the gendered martial body and mind. This interconnection between the activities of the human body and the human mind is evident when Goyne (2003: 85) argues that differences between male and female “hormones, chemistry and chromosomal makeup” are factors that explain why men’s bodies and minds are physically better suited to combat service. The male brain produces significantly higher levels of blood hormones such as testosterone and androgen. Bioscience research consistently reports that differences between the levels of these hormones in male bodies and female bodies are a dominant factor that explains why men tend to be more aggressive than are women. Men’s higher aggression levels are
advantageous because the combat fighter is required to maim or kill the enemy during battle.

**Regulating bodies**

Supporters of the ADF’s GCP routinely refer to “scientific proof” (Summers, A 1999: 9) that measures the superior performance of the average individual male martial body. These persons/institutions cite this data to justify the restrictions the state imposes on women’s military service, such as the ADF’s GCP (Summers, A 1999: 9–12). References to the ‘inferior’ performance of the average female martial body is the most dominant theme which recurs in the ADF’s GCP documents and other policy discussions that justify why the state enforces this regime.

The ADF’s GCP documents repeatedly portray the individual female combat body as ‘undisciplined’, it is unable to achieve the physical performance standards required of the docile combat fighter. The dominant sub-themes that appear in this evidence are average male and female bodily strength, fitness, aerobic capacities and skeletal injuries. These Reports argue that females demonstrate inferior performances against these biophysical assessment criteria when they engage in physically demanding military roles. Policy discussions overwhelmingly review average biophysical performances of the female martial body. These Reports rarely acknowledge how some women outperform men in bio-kinetic tests. These includes data collected from male and female military personnel who take part in combat training courses and other adapted testing environments such as Defence clinical trials (see Table Eight).
The Holden and Tanner Report explicitly acknowledges the limitations of relying on average gendered biophysical performance data to defend Defence policy that imposes restrictions on women’s service. Holden and Tanner explore this topic in their Executive Summary and by doing so, elevate its discussion of biophysical competencies. The Holden and Tanner Report inform its audience that those who support the exclusion of women from combat service sometimes exaggerate women’s diminished biophysical capacities:

The argument that women are not as physically capable of men is partly [my emphasis] true. There are some [military] tasks that are more difficult for women but perhaps, as the NZDF [New Zealand Defence Force] has argued, these difficulties are exaggerated (Holden and Tanner 2001: iii).

Table Eight below lists representative qualitative and quantitative data extracted from the ADF’s GCP documents. This evidence illustrates how policy Reports published prior to the Holden and Tanner Report routinely diminishes the biophysical performance of the average female martial body. The dominant way they do this is by referring to the inferior biophysical performance capacities of the female population. This approach to policy debate ignores Defence bioscience research that establishes that some female personnel can meet combat admission standards (*e.g.* Castle 1978: 118–119). I have established how the logic behind these arguments contains an obvious flaw because it draws on average gender performance data. These policy discussions support the replication of pre-existing deeply entrenched stereotypes, which imagines the male martial body as ‘able’ and the female combat body as ‘unable’ (Thornton 1990: 140).
Table Eight

Fitness, Strength and Injuries –

Defence Policy Documents and Operational Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Competencies:</td>
<td>“In general the pre-entry physical environment of the male can be expected to be more conducive to reaching the PULHEEMS [defence biophysical competencies standards] [sic] [more] quickly than the female. These differences [between women and men] are significant. Women will take longer to reach the [PULHEEMS] standards.”</td>
<td>Australian Army 1978a: 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength Injuries, Fitness</td>
<td>“Only in the area of physical performance is there any serious questioning of female [inferior] capacity.”</td>
<td>Australian Army 1978b : Chapter 6–10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Such [combat] restrictions were not just based on beliefs regarding what jobs are socially appropriate for females, but were also intended to prevent the problems encountered when women are assigned to work that is normed for the average [my emphasis] male physique.”</td>
<td>Thomas 1978: 43</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“They (women) are limited by strength. They are good in clerical jobs, but if you put them out in a job where physical strength comes in, they’re buggered (Unidentified “male soldier” cited in Burton 1996: 38):”</td>
<td>Burton 1996: 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“A gender-neutral [fitness] standard will unfairly subject women to standards that are unrealistic.”</td>
<td>Dunn 1998: 8</td>
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The context of the statements I cite in Table Nine justifies the need to enforce the GCP by arguing that this regime is essential to maximise the ADF’s operational effectiveness. The common message these policy documents communicate to their audience is that the state must only appoint men as combat personnel as no or few women can reach the minimum biophysical standards required of the docile fighter. The Ferguson Report
imagines only the male body as able to reach the biophysical standards (e.g. see reference to “physical strength”) required of the proficient combat fighter. Moreover, in this passage Dunn (1998: 4) refers to Australia’s enemy combat personnel as “him”. This reference to an all-male enemy combat fighter subtly reinforces the idea that the all-male combat body is superior to the all-female combat body. Moreover, it also suggests Australia’ national security automatically diminishes, to at least some degree, if the ADF partially feminises its combat corps:

At some stage of ground warfare there comes a time when the infantry soldier [my emphasis], with combat support, will be required to ‘seek out and close with the enemy, to either kill or capture him [my emphasis], to seize and hold ground’. This action will be undertaken in an environment where the enemy will attempt to defend themselves by killing their attackers as quickly and as efficiently as possible. This is the environment of ground combat; an environment which is brutal and where high levels of physical strength and endurance are required [my emphasis]. (Dunn 1998: 4).

The content of The Quinn and Toulson Report is representative of how the ADF’s GCP documents argue that the superior performance of the male combat body is a defining factor that maximises this institution’s military effectiveness. This Report elevates the influence women’s physiological factors exert over the GCP. Quinn and Toulson (1987: 6) rank ‘military strength’ arguments as “the second major argument [my emphasis]” that justifies the need to preserve the GCP. These military officers diminish the performance of the female combat body when they argue:

The advocates of this view [in favour of enforcing the GCP] suggest that women [combat officers] might weaken the military [my emphasis] because of their different [inferior] physical attributes [my emphasis] and differences between the genders in aggressiveness (Quinn and Toulson 1987: 6b).

By ranking this factor as a “second” major argument, The Quinn and Toulson Report provide an example of how the ADF’s GCP documents are a social product of their times. The first and second major arguments listed in this Report centre on “military effectiveness” issues (Quinn and Toulson 1987: 6b). This focus on biology is a shift from
the GCP Reports published in the 1970s that centre on social and cultural factors to justify enforcing the GCP.

In a similar vein to the ADF’s GCP documents, Australian Defence personnel, Government Ministers and Australia’s commercial print media also defend the GCP by diminishing the biophysical performances of the female martial body. Discussions that centre on the capacities of the female anatomy have dominated public debate over the past two decades. Those who support the GCP argue that the need to maximise the ADF’s fighting capacity is the primary rationale that justifies the state upholding the bio-regulatory regime it enforces over the gendered combat body.

The Australian Government commissioned the Patterson Report in 2002, partially because the ADF was unable to recruit and retain sufficient personnel across most combat and support specialties since the 1980s and because female retention rates had fared poorly against government targets. This crisis caused the Australian Government to consider opening some combat roles to women to alleviate chronic and persistent Defence personnel shortages (The Canberra Times 2000; ADF 2004: NP). The Patterson Report is evidence that the state uses biomedical data to evaluate the biophysical capacities of male and female Defence personnel as a means of formulating Defence policy. The Patterson Report measures the biophysical performances of male and female Australian Army personnel who engage in a range of training exercises on the ADF’s Infantry obstacle course. Patterson et al. (2005) do not measure women’s ability to reach entry standards required in other roles the ADF classifies as Direct Combat, such as Air Defence Guards and Naval Clearance Divers. I argue that this focus on one combat mustering is evidence that the state harbours strong reservations about women entering
combat service in those land Army fighting roles that primarily engage the enemy hand-to-hand as these units provide the last line of Australia’s national defence. This theory is consistent with the content of the ADF’s GCP documents. For example, in multiple sections of The Ferguson Report, Dunn (e.g. 1998: 4, 14) reiterates his argument that women must never be admitted into Infantry and Armour. This Report argues that lowering combat entry standards in Armour and Artillery to accommodate female combat personnel poses the greatest risk to Australia’s ability to defend itself against an enemy military force because these roles are more likely to “close with and kill the enemy (Dunn 1998: 13).”

The Patterson Report quantifies gendered group performances against criteria such as: average “muscular strength” levels, average “physical fitness” levels, average “physiological strain” rates (Patterson et al. 2005: 5) and average “injury and illness” rates (Patterson et al. 2005: 3). Patterson et al. (2005: 15) conclude a minority of female Army personnel (7%) could attain the minimum competency standards required to pass the Australian Army’s Infantry obstacle course in 2003. This document does not quantify the number of male participants who passed all three components of this obstacle course, but it does provide figures that quantify male pass rates against individual obstacles (Patterson et al. 2005: 1–61). This omission silently emphasises the way this Report in fact centres on the biophysical performances of female personnel, although this is not an official objective of The Patterson Report (Patterson et al. 2005: Abstract).

Table Nine, which appears below displays a representative list of public statements that argues it is imperative to maximise the ADF’s operational effectiveness. This data shows how Australia’s Defence personnel and Federal Government Ministers persistently
defend the need to exclude the ‘inferior’ female combat body from frontline military service. Over the past two decades, those who support the GCP by deferring to bioscience cite quantitative research data to support their position in around half of all instances (e.g. Goyne 2003; see Table Nine). These references to applied science research legitimise policy debates that centre mostly or exclusively on bio-kinetic factors. The community at large regards science as a more objective and rational way to defend public policy. As support for gender equality grows in the community, defenders of the GCP shift their focus to bioscience arguments. Defence analysts argue that debates that centre on the biophysical performance of the gendered body are more rational than social and cultural arguments that focus on the need to enforce fixed gender roles. This is because scientists apply universal laws of nature to draw conclusions and their personal opinions about the role and place of women and men in society do not influence their data analysis (e.g. Summers, A 1999: 9–10).

Prior to 1991, those who cite biophysical competency arguments to justify their support for the GCP rarely cite scientific research data to strengthen their positions. These persons centre their general discussion on anecdotal experiences that suggest that women cannot reach the standards required of the competent combat fighter. Policy discussions that do not cite hard data were more popular prior to 1991, which is the period before the ADF integrated women into armed combat-related roles. The near absence of women from all armed roles in Australia’s and other nations’ military institutions prior to the early 1990s partially explains why supporters of the GCP took for granted that they did not need to defend their position by citing bioscience research. The reality is that little Defence bioscience research existed prior to the mid-1980s that quantified the bio-performance gap between male and female bodies in the military environment, as so few
women engaged in armed support roles and combat roles since after the end of the Second World War (e.g. Pinch 2006: 53; Winslow and Dunn 2002: 645). An example of this anecdotal approach to policy debate is evident when Bruce Ruxton rejects the Hawke Government’s decision to integrate women into combat-related roles in the RAN. In a media interview conducted by ABC Radio, journalist Libby Price asks Ruxton “Why shouldn’t women be engaged in combat roles?” In response to this question, he (1990) argues:

Because they aren’t, you know, they way they’re made. They’re not fit enough to do the jobs that males do in combat. As a female, you wouldn’t be able to carry 60 pounds and maybe two pounds of water, plus your rifle or whatever it might be (Bruce Ruxton, President of the Victorian RSL, in ABC Radio 1990: NP).

The virtual absence of references to hard data in policy debates during the last millennium makes the anecdotal approach to debate subjective and difficult to defend under scrutiny. I argue that supporters of the GCP cite anecdotal experiences as a way to defend the military’s patriarchal strictures (e.g. Smith 2000: 17). There is a consensus among feminists and Defence scholars that bioscience data proves that some women cannot reach competency admission standards for armed combat-support and combat-orientated fighting roles in western nations’ armed forces (e.g. Winslow and Dunn 2002: 645; Pinch 2006: 53) including Australia’s armed forces, as confirmed by The Patterson Report (Patterson et al. 2005: 15).

In recent decades, supporters of the GCP overwhelmingly cite average biophysical data on specific parts of the human body. Defence bioscience research captures gender performances of specific bodily capacities, such as the average strength levels of “female frames, compared to average male frames (e.g. Dines 2000: 115, see Table Nine). I argue
that this focus on the performance of specific parts the human anatomy illustrates how Defence and Government elites defend a policy apparatus that bears the character traits of what Foucault (1978: 139) labels the “anatomo-politics” of a bio-regulatory regime the state enforces to create disciplined (martial) bodies.

The collection of statements contained in Table Nine illustrate how references to the inferior performance of the female martial body persist during the period of this study and gradually becomes more prominent after the publication of the Quinn and Toulson Report in 1987. This historical pattern in the evidence reflects the manner in which civilian, political and military elites who support Australia’s GCP pose consistent arguments over this timeframe. Growing support for the realisation of gender equality in Australia’s civilian community is a dominant factor that explains this shift as more people in Australian society reject patriarchy as a legitimate power structure. The enactment of sex discrimination legislation in Australia’s jurisdictions is strong evidence that the state rejects the argument that certain work roles are domains of absolute male privilege (e.g. Summers 2008: 5).
### Table Nine

**Physical Competencies: Non Policy Document Sources**

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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Policy context</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Competencies:</td>
<td>“We are sympathetic to the concept of employment opportunities for women in the forces. There are, however, certain limitations. In some operational categories such as fighter pilots, infantry and gunnery, women are <em>normally</em> [my emphasis] not as effective as men.”</td>
<td>F. W. Mahler, First Assistant Secretary, Department of Defence [Australia], 1974: 2</td>
<td>Australia is required to comply with <em>Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 111</em> (1958).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>“Advanced infantry and other arms training puts great stress on female frames. Their pelvic structure and high-arched fine-boned feet put them at risk when loaded down with an infantryman’s combat load, and required to scramble over rough terrain.”</td>
<td>Brigadier P.J. Greville Australian Army 1988: 16</td>
<td>Hawke Australian Government publicly expresses in principle support to integrate women into combat-related roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injuries, Fitness</td>
<td>“I think it’s asking a lot of some women to perform the physical [combat] tasks.”</td>
<td>Lieutenant General John Grey ADF Chief of the General Staff 1992: 12</td>
<td>ADF integrates women into combat-related roles in the RAN.</td>
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<td>“Females are 50%-60% as strong as males in the upper body and 70%-80% ... in the lower body.”</td>
<td>Wing Commander Amanda Dines; Psychologist, Department of Defence (Australia) 2000: 115</td>
<td>The ADF publishes The Campbell Report.</td>
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<td>“Even among highly trained athletes, [women’s aerobic] capacity is between 15 and 20 percent [lower than men’s].”</td>
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<td>“Most males (91%) completed the 15-km march … most females (64%) did not complete the march … due to severe pain in the back, shoulders, calves and feet.”</td>
<td>The Patterson Report Patterson <em>et al.</em> 2005: 6</td>
<td>Australian Government plans to open combat-related roles to women in the Australian Army’s Artillery Corps to alleviate chronic personnel shortages. Since 1992, this institution was the only member of the ADF’s tri-services to exclude women from some combat-related roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Therefore at most only 7% (2 from 28) of the assessed females would be expected to pass this proposed infantry [fitness] barrier after 12 weeks ... training.”</td>
<td>Patterson <em>et al.</em> 2005: 15</td>
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During the new millennium, ADF spokespersons and Australian Government Ministers defend the GCP almost exclusively by referring to the need to uphold combat biophysical performance standards. For example, in 2009, in a joint media interview reported by *The Australian* newspaper, Defence Science and Personnel Minister Greg Combet and Brigadier Krause (Australian Army, Commander Darwin Brigade) defend the GCP solely on biophysical grounds. Combet (quoted in Dodd 2009) states that “physical criteria” for admission into the ADF’s combat roles should transition to a gender-neutral regime. In a similar vein to Combet, Krause (quoted in Dodd 2009) informs the public that the ADF supports the idea that any man or woman may serve in combat roles if they can to demonstrate all “the [physical] requirements of the job”. This media interview responds to the recent announcement made by the Rudd Government that it supports the transition towards gender-neutral entrance standards for all combat roles (*e.g.* Dodd 2009).

Over the past decade, the state and Australia’s Defence Executive persistently defend the need to preserve the GCP in Infantry roles, and by doing so, they implicitly suggest that the ADF might eventually admit women into other roles that hold Direct Combat status such as Naval Clearance Divers. The thrust of these policy discussions argue that the ADF must never lower biophysical standards for those combat roles where personnel normally engage the enemy face-to-face, such as Infantry. The joint media that features Krause and Smith is an example where ADF Executives and Federal Government Ministers argue it is essential to preserve the competency standards of those land army fighting roles that normally engage the enemy face-to-face during warfare. Krause (in Dodd 2009) states that the appointment of combat personnel should be subject to these applicants being able to demonstrate they possess the physical strength to “carry an 80kg
backpack”. This reference to the backpack is strongly associated with Land Army fighting roles where combat staff must carry their own fighting equipment and other supplies in the field (Anderson 1997: NP).

In contrast to public statements made by Defence and Government leaders, Australia’s commercial print media continue to challenge the notion that the female body can ever reach the biophysical standards required of the docile frontline fighter throughout the ADF’s combat ranks. The dominant theme these media articles communicate is that the female combat body is unable. One way the media conveys this message is by publishing caricatures that ridicule the notion of a female docile combat fighter. This parody is evident in the way News Limited reports the announcement made by Australia’s Defence Minister Stephen Smith in 2011 that the Australian Government remains committed to establishing gender-neutral combat entry standards by *circa* 2016 (*e.g.* Snowdon and Smith 2011). A feature story published online by The Punch Team at News Limited embedded an image that parodies the notion of the able feminine combat soldier. Celebrated Australian cartoonist Jon Kudelka, a regular contributor to News Limited publications, is the creator of this caricature and his image features an armed male and an armed female combatant engaging in urban warfare (see Figure Three). The female combatant gazes at her buttocks, as she asks her male colleague “Does this flak jacket make my bum look big?” In response to this sexist self-deprecating question, her male colleague grimaces as he moans: “I knew this would happen” (Kudelka in News Limited 2011).
The male combatant’s negative response to the female combatant’s question is indicative of the ingrained nature of gendered stereotypes that imagines the female combat body is unable to achieve the physical performance standards required of the docile martial fighter. Kudelka’s sketch portrays the female combat body with large buttocks and he uses text to reinforce the way he imagines the female combatant’s body as undisciplined. This feminine image is the opposite shape of the quintessential all-male combat fighter, whose body is strong and athletic (e.g. Buttsworth 2003: 130, 254–255). I argue that Kudelka’s caricature also stereotypes and diminishes the undisciplined female martial mind in a more nuanced way. His image and caption suggests that ADF female personnel are vain and focus on their physical even when they engage in live warfare in combat workspaces.
Disciplinary spaces

Supporters of the GCP frequently argue that the ADF’s combat *workspaces* must perpetually remain off limits to female personnel. Two themes are dominant in the evidence I explore from a bio-regulation standpoint. The first topic concerns the way combat workspaces pre-exist as naturalised male-only workspaces. The second subject matter regards the desire to preserve the front–rear binary as a gendered social construction.

Supporters of the GCP who refer to naturalised workspaces and the ‘front–rear’ binary argue that the feminisation of combat work areas automatically erodes the ADF’s fighting capacity, which in turn diminishes the ability of Australia’s military institution to defend the nation. Foucault’s theory of bio-power theorises the reasons why the state partitions workspaces and creates “enclosures” in the military institution as a means of creating disciplinary spaces (Foucault 1979: 141, 143) and supervising the individual docile body (Foucault 1979: 147). The state may impose different regimes on each space according to their unique functions and the composition of personnel in each demarcated setting. These partitions concentrate task-appropriate disciplinary practices within each workspace and this maximises the productivity of each separate area. Foucault (1979: 142) terms each unique spatial setting an “enclosure” and he identifies the “military barracks; the army” as partitioned enclosures the state regulates. This aspect of the state’s bio-power regime creates “functional sites” and “useful space[s]” (Foucault 1979: 143). These sites and spaces uphold a “network of relations” and “hierarchical” (Foucault 1979: 146) social relations that maximise the docility of the armed forces (Foucault 1979: 142–147).
Supporters of the GCP are explicit when they mention how the ADF’s frontline workspace has always been an exclusively male domain and by doing so, they highlight how the exclusion of women from the physical environment of combat is deeply naturalised. Women did not enter combat service in the ADF until 2013. Defenders of the GCP argue that it is obvious women do not belong in combat workspaces because women have been perpetually absent from this work environment. They argue that this fact provides strong evidence it is natural for men to monopolise this space. Those who support the GCP in this vein do not offer further details to justify their arguments. They assume that their audience concurs it is clear that combat workspaces are essentially masculine constructions and historical evidence supports this viewpoint.

Clare Burton’s research captures the way male ADF personnel reject women entering any workspaces traditionally dominated by men, especially combat spaces. For example, Burton (1996: 44) reports “Others [male ADF personnel] understand men to be experiencing women’s entry [into combat-support roles] as women ‘invading men’s space’ [my emphasis].” She supports her argument by citing qualitative interview data she collected from multiple male ADF personnel during the mid-1990s. A statement made by an unnamed male sailor is similar to those made by other male personnel interviewed by Dr Burton. This sailor’s testimony is an example of how men who support the GCP centre their argument on the need to exclude women from disciplinary workspaces. He refers to partitioned workspaces on four occasions in a narrow passage of verbal discussion, as evident from his use of the words “domain” (twice), “sea” and “men’s space” to frame his argument. This thematic reiteration is typical of the way other supporters of the ADF’s GCP present the issue of ‘space’ as central to their defence of why women are unsuitable to work in frontline military work environments:
The females entering the men’s domain [my emphasis] is what I think was the big killer [my emphasis] in the Navy to start with. We had 75 years of the [all-male] Australian Navy and obviously centuries of Navies before that was all male. And suddenly you have all these women going to sea [my emphasis] and all the Chiefs and POs [Petty Officers] and all the old guard going ‘No no, I’m sorry, this is a male’s domain [my emphasis]’ – invading the men’s space [my emphasis] was a big problem [my emphasis] (male sailor, cited in Burton 1996: 44).

This sailor’s use of the words “big killer” and “big problem” reiterates his argument that the integration of women into previously male-only spaces between 1990 and 1996 severely (i.e. his reference to “big”) undermines the dynamics and operational performance of Australia’s Naval Service. This sailor claims that serious operational problems arise when the RAN deploys women to “sea”, the ocean being the Navy’s primary frontline work area. In a nuanced manner, this sailor’s testimony appeals to the state to support the gendered construction of the front [masculine]–rear [feminine] binary in Australia’s military institution. In a similar vein to other male ADF personnel who explicitly support the GCP, this sailor argues that the integration of women into frontline workspaces automatically diminishes the RAN’s fighting capacities. This sailor’s testimony is similar to other male Defence personnel who support the GCP publicly but offer no specific reason/s to explain why the ADF’s fighting capacities automatically diminish when women enter armed fighting roles in frontline workspaces.

Front–rear

Supporters of the GCP frequently defend the need to preserve the so-called ‘front–rear’ binary that exists in the ADF’s tri-services. These references to the front–rear binary are sometimes implicit and sometimes explicit. With the exception of The Burton Report, references to the word ‘front’ do not feature in the ADF’s GCP documents. This notion of the ‘front’ is not an official term that defines the bounds of the ADF’s GCP (ADF
1994). In the military context, the term “front” normally refers to the combat ranks, or, more likely, the physical locations where military battles take place (Yuval-Davis 2004: 171–172). Some junior ADF personnel interviewed by Clare Burton cite this unofficial term, the front/frontline when they refer to the detrimental effect women ostensibly cause to the RAN’s operational capacities when they are appointed into combat-related roles. A popular argument they discuss with Burton is that women’s bodies are inferior because they cannot reach the competency standards required to work in frontline spaces (e.g. Burton 1996: 34).

Male Defence personnel, Federal Members of Parliament and Australia’s broadcast and print media dominate discussions that cite the word ‘front’ and ‘frontline’ to reject the legitimacy of women participating in combat workspaces. An example of this is a public statement made by Australia’s former Assistant Defence Minister, then opposition Federal Member of Parliament Bruce Scott. Scott (2009) appeals to the state to preserve the ADF’s ‘frontline’ functional sites as a male-exclusive construct. Scott’s media release appears in an interview in the Courier Mail. In his capacity as Shadow Defence Minister, he responds to Defence Minister Stephen Smith’s statement that the Gillard Australian Government plans to implement gender-neutral biophysical combat entry standards in the ADF. The themes Scott raises in his discussion are representative of those made by individual ADF personnel and Federal Parliamentarians who have openly supported the GCP. Scott (2009) warns the public that overturning the GCP poses risks to the defence of the nation because the “presence of women on the frontline [my emphasis] would threaten the rational thought processes [my emphasis] and performance [my emphasis] of male soldiers [my emphasis] (Bruce Scott, Shadow Defence Minister, in Courier Mail 2009: NP).”
The broader content of Scott’s press statement appeals to the state to preserve a regime that bears the hallmark traits of a regulatory mechanism similar to Foucault’s description of the bio-political regime the state enforces over the disciplined martial body and functional sites. Scott’s discussion illustrates the way the state regulates individual bodies in the military institution as a means of preserving its human population. This interconnection between the state’s bio-power regime and the anatomo-politics of the human body is evident when Scott argues that the state must discipline the gendered (i.e. his reference to “male soldiers”) martial body, as evident from his reference to rational “thought processes” as mental performance. This bio-regulation essential in order to maximise the ADF’s operational effectiveness (i.e. his reference to “performance”). Furthermore, Scott argues it is imperative that the ADF maximises the mental docility of the combat fighter when he performs in functional combat spaces, which he refers to as the “frontline”. Moreover, he warns the public that the integration of women into these male-only areas automatically erodes the ADF’s combat effectiveness (Bruce Scott, Shadow Defence Minister, in Courier Mail 2009: NP).

Foucault’s bio-power framework does not theorise the sexual division of labour and power that occurs in the military institution (e.g. Sawicki 1991). Feminist analysis of the front–rear binary enhances our understanding of the social forces elites preserve and replicate when they centre their argument on spaces to defend the GCP. From a feminist perspective, the “front” refers to those military operations and spaces that impose restrictions on female military personnel’s ability to engage with men on equal terms (Yuval-Davis 1985: 651; 2004: 172). The front is the most masculinised section of the armed forces. The ‘front’ is where the gendered division of labour and power is most concentrated; upholding this construct as a male-exclusive domain preserves the
patriarchal character of the nation’s military institution (e.g. Enloe 1983: 150–155, 157–158). Military personnel located in the “rear” support the frontline fighters. These personnel include supply personnel, communications staff, nurses and doctors. These units include a disproportionate number of female personnel compared to frontline units.

By enforcing a GCP, the state creates the ‘front’ and ‘rear’ as functional sites that have distinctly different gender compositions. Women are subordinate to men in the military institution primarily because the GCP renders them absent from the core workspaces of the armed forces. Those who argued frontline military spaces must remain a domain of male exclusivity seek to replicate the elevated status bestowed on the ‘able’ male combat body. This argument is evident from how supporters of the GCP such as Scott (2009) routinely argue that only the male gendered body can succeed when it engages in the military’s core functional sites.

In a similar vein to arguments put forward by ADF personnel who support the GCP, Australia’s print media persistently highlight the manner in which the ADF’s front–rear binary is naturalised in Australia’s military institution. The dominant way Australia’s print media communicates this message is by portraying the erosion of the front–rear binary as a violation of deeply entrenched gendered norms that underpin Australia’s social fabric and culture. This public scrutiny of the ADF’s core functional site in Australia’s commercial media is consistent with what Foucault (1978: 145) labels “surveillance”, one of the practices the state uses to monitor the disciplined sexual body. Australia’s print media exercises its cultural power and influence by engaging in what Foucault (1979) labels the “normalizing gaze” and mimics surveillance practices of the state. This behaviour shows how the print media is complicit in its support for enforcing
the existing bio-political regime that monitors, regulates and controls the gendered combat body. The objective of this surveillance and gaze is to preserve a deeply entrenched gendered social order that prevails in Australia’s civilian society and martial institution. Foucault (1978: 144) labels this hierarchy and organisation of behavioural patterns as the “normalizing society”, with the enforcement and replication of behavioural patterns underpinning this social structure.

Bio-power is a regulatory apparatus the state imposes on its citizens that permeates society and normalises social behaviours of populations (Larrinaga and Doucet 2008: 520). The executive employs technologies at its disposal to enforce this regime. The state enforces various “regulatory and corrective mechanisms” (Foucault 1978: 144) to preserve and replicate societal norms it deems desirable, those that preserve life. I argue that these controls include the enforcement of fixed gender roles in the military organisation. The state enacts legislation, enforces laws and manages a range of agencies and apparatuses that regulate the body to create a “normalizing society” (Foucault 1978: 144). The normalizing society is a central feature of the state’s bio-power regime that is centred on (e.g. medical, military) technologies to preserve “life” (Foucault 1978: 144). Foucault (1978: 144) argues that the state has gradually become less reliant on legislation and the judiciary to enforce social norms. Over time, the state increasingly uses biotechnologies to regulate populations and enforce social norms.

Australia’s print media actively supports the state’s bio-regulatory regime. As an influential cultural institution, Australia’s patriarchal print media is complicit in supporting and replicating social norms by engaging in what Foucault terms “surveillances” of the disciplined body (Foucault 1978: 145–146). In the context of this
study, Australia’s print media seeks to preserve the status quo of gender norms that elevate men in Australia’s civilian society and military institution. Australia’s print media is a patriarchal structure that benefits from the broader categorisation of power and entitlement that Australia’s patriarchal society bestows on influential male-dominated institutions and male elites (Spurling 2000). Australia’s patriarchal mainstream media, especially the print media, acts as a proxy of the state and supports the bio-power regime by monitoring the gendered combat body. This media persistently prints stories that support the notion that the female body is not docile, it is unable, and its incompetence poses a threat to the survival of the population. I explore this evidence throughout this chapter.

Table Ten lists a sample of 46 instances where Australia’s print media and digital media report developments concerning the ADF’s GCP and insert the word ‘front’ and ‘frontline’ into the headline of the article. Moreover, the words ‘front’ and frontline’ also appear in the textual discussion of these 46 articles. These two words also appear in the text of most other media articles that chronicle the GCP but do not include the word “front” and “frontline” in the headline.
Table Ten – Media and Frontline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication title</th>
<th>Media publication</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Women Set to Fight on the Front Line”</td>
<td><em>The Daily Telegraph</em></td>
<td>06 February 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Holding Fire on Frontline Decision”</td>
<td><em>The Daily Telegraph</em></td>
<td>10 February 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Women Set to Fight on Frontline”</td>
<td><em>Sydney Morning Herald</em></td>
<td>4 January 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Right to fight is Front Line of Feminism”</td>
<td><em>The Weekend Australian</em></td>
<td>9/10 January 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Women Soldiers Face Risk Even if not on the Frontline”</td>
<td><em>Australian Associated Press</em></td>
<td>3 April 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Frontline no Barrier in Gender Wars”</td>
<td><em>The Australian</em></td>
<td>15 May 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Fighting on the Frontline”</td>
<td><em>The Age</em></td>
<td>19 September 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Frontline Combat Role for Women”</td>
<td><em>The Australian</em></td>
<td>11 August 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Green Light Given for Women Soldiers on Frontline”</td>
<td><em>Sydney Morning Herald</em></td>
<td>22 August 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Women on the Front Line”</td>
<td><em>Brisbane Times</em></td>
<td>18 March 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“More Women ‘Will Die on Frontline’ than Men”</td>
<td><em>The Australian</em></td>
<td>9 September 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Frontline no Place for Women: Coalition”</td>
<td><em>Sydney Morning Herald</em></td>
<td>10 September 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Frontline Women Equal but Different”</td>
<td><em>The Daily Telegraph</em></td>
<td>12 January 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Factiva 2006-2010)

These references to the ‘front’ first emerged as a regular feature in Australia’s print media in 1988. This development coincides with a watershed national conference held in Canberra, coordinated by Australia’s Minister for Defence and Science Personnel David Simmons (ADF 1999: NP). A core objective of this conference evaluates the merits of
expanding women’s participation in support roles in the ADF. From 1989, coverage of
the ADF’s GCP became more common in Australia’s print media because the Hawke
Australian Government (1983-1996) announced that it was committed to integrating
women into armed combat-support roles on a permanent basis (Young 1989: 5). This
policy became effective during 1990. Prior to 1990, no administration had ever
announced that it intended to open combat support roles to female personnel on a
permanent basis (ADF 1999: NP).

By framing the issue of spaces as the central issue to developments that threaten to dilute
the ADF’s GCP, Australia’s commercial print media actively shows support for the bio-
political regime the state enforces over the gendered martial body. The print media does
this in two ways that centre on the way Australia’s armed forces polarise the sexual
division of labour and power in the military institution, by excluding women from
partitioned frontline work areas. The first way the media focuses on space is by
persistently inserting the words ‘front’ and ‘frontline’ in the header of their articles. The
second approach is more explicit. The media publishes stories that argue it is imperative
that the ADF preserves the front–rear binary and publishes the opinions of staff
journalists and Defence commentators that offer specific reasons that justify this
position.

The insertion of the words ‘front’ and ‘frontline’ in the title and body of media articles
communicates latent messages. These stories inform its readers that a sexual division of
labour and power is deeply naturalised in Australia’s military institution and that the
partial or full reversal of the GCP erodes these gendered norms. By persistently using
words that focus on the front–rear binary in the headlines and textual content of their
news articles, the print media replicates pre-existing cultural images and cultural narratives that construct combat workspaces as male-only domains in the nation’s imagination (e.g. Enloe 1983: 150–155 & 157–158).

A feature article that appears in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 2009 has the title “Frontline no place for women: coalition”. This article is representative of the way Australia’s print media continue to highlight the face that the front–rear binary exists in Australia’s military institution. This use of language in article headlines provides nuanced support for the ways the state demarcates functional sites in the armed forces based on gender. By inserting the words “no place” in the title of this article the media uses manifest language to make prominent an opinion put forward by a senior parliamentarian who argues that the state must never integrate women into frontline workspaces. This article uses language that refers to spaces twice in the headline, “Frontline” and “place”. This reiteration emphasises its concern that the state plans to extinguish the front–rear as a gendered construction (Sydney Morning Herald 2009: NP). The slant and content of this story is typical of others in Australia’s print media and shows how Australia’s patriarchal media have long supported the gendered division of labour and power that exists in Australia’s armed forces (e.g. Spurling 2000).

### 6.4 Embodiment of global patriarchy

The bio-political regime Australia’s print media supports, the GCP, is one structure that underpins the patriarchal hierarchy that exists in Australia’s military institution, its civilian society and the global order-of-power. The enforcement and replication of a range of fixed gender roles underpin men’s elevated status and power in domains such as
sport, international relations and the armed forces. The possession of a gendered body is normally the defining factor that subordinates women to men in male-dominated institutions. A GCP reinforces the way patriarchy is embodied. Excluding women from combat service imagines the male body as culturally superior to female body because those who enforce the GCP cite the inferior performance of the female body as a dominant factor that justifies this intervention (Thornton 1990: 140).

Supporters of the GCP cite the sexual division of labour that persists in Australia’s civilian society and military institution as evidence that the female body is naturally not suitable for combat service. By doing so, they replicate gender stereotypes that imagine the male combat body as ‘able’. They simultaneously portray the female combat body as ‘unable’ by claiming it is a scientific fact that women cannot compete on a physical level with men in other domains outside of the military institution. Moreover, they mention how the sexual division of labour is deeply naturalised and argue that universal laws of science explain why these gendered structures exist. Supporters of the GCP cite these social norms as factors that legitimise the state enforcing a bio-political regime over gendered martial bodies.

Supporters of the GCP ultimately defend the embodiment of global patriarchy by highlighting the way two social norms are naturalised and deeply entrenched. These gendered structures replicate stereotypes that imagine that male bodies and female bodies are naturally suited to certain roles in the civilian society and military institution. The first cultural norm supporters of the GCP refer to is the protector–protected binary. Elites also argue that laws of nature explain why the state empowers men to command occupations that command power over ‘life-and-death’.
These two debates intertwine as they centre on the way the gendered body is naturalised. These policy discussions implicitly defend the bio-power regime the state enforces in its military institution. Those who cite protectionism and life-and-death arguments warn their audience that the ADF’s operational effectiveness will automatically erode when the state appoints female combat personnel. This outcome is dangerous as it diminishes the capacity of the armed forces to defend the nation. These two approaches to public debate support a viewpoint that believes the female body and mind cannot compete with the superior male body and mind in professions that impose gruelling demands on the body.

**Female protectionism**

Supporters of the GCP persistently argue that the existence of deeply entrenched cultural norms which imagine men as protectors of the nation’s vulnerable females is a strong factor that justifies the state enforcing this regime (e.g. Department of Veterans’ Affairs 2006: 100). The characteristics of female protectionism arguments I explore in this section are fundamentally embodied and defend the patriarchal order that prevails inside the military institution and other domains beyond warfare. These policy discussions appeals to the notion that the male body is a superior performer both physically and mentally when it engages in gruelling work roles in the nation’s civilian sector, the military institution and other arenas on the global stage.

Defenders of the GCP who focus on the average performances of male and female martial bodies highlight the fact that the protector–protected binary is a deeply entrenched gendered norm that exists in Australia’s civilian society and military
institution. These policy discussions contextualise issues concerning female protectionism and the bio-performances of gendered bodies and centre on two core arguments, both of which contend that the state must preserve female protectionism as a social norm.

The first viewpoint claims that female combatants are more likely than are male combatants to suffer severe trauma if the enemy captures them and detains them as prisoners or war. The second approach asserts that the physically weaker female combatant has a major disadvantage when she competes with a physically stronger male fighter in a hand-to-hand duel and this reality justifies the state shielding women from hand-to-hand combat fighting against an all-male enemy. Supporters of the GCP contend that the state must exclude women from engaging the enemy in a physical duel, as it is inevitable that women will suffer higher casualties and fatalities than male combatants. Reversing the GCP illogical as it defies the state’s role as defender of its population (e.g. Stiehm 1982).

Greg Sheridan’s defence of the GCP appeals to female protectionism. He implicitly argues that the state must uphold the bio-power regime it enforces over the gendered martial body. Sheridan’s feature article appears in *The Australian* on 17 September 2009. He responds to a series of public statements made between 9 and 11 September 2009 by Defence Minister Stephen Smith. These announcements inform the community that the Gillard Labor Government supports the transition towards gender-neutral combat entry standards (e.g. Combet in Walters 2009; Combet in Dodd 2009).
Sheridan (2009) argues that it is imperative women remain excluded from combat service as male combat personnel will act on instinct and offer protection to female combat colleagues injured on the frontline. This extract passage from Sheridan’s news article imagines the female combat body as unable and inferior, as evident from his reference to “extreme demands”. He further argues that this problem of female protectionism automatically erodes a combat “unit’s effectiveness”:

Many practical considerations arise from the special nature of military culture and the extreme demands in battle. In close combat male soldiers will try to protect female soldiers [my emphasis]. This is a law of human nature [my emphasis]. The unit’s effectiveness will suffer [my emphasis] (Greg Sheridan, Senior Political Editor, The Australian 2009).

Sheridan’s statement is representative of the way other male elites draw on pre-existing cultural norms that naturalise the male body as an empowered defender of the weaker, vulnerable female body that cannot cope with the “extreme demands of battle”. He portrays male protectionism as a universal law of nature and by doing so, defends a global patriarchal order that subordinates the unable female body to the superior able male body.

Young’s thesis on the “logic of masculine protection” (Young 2003: 1) offers a conceptual framework that enables scholars to theorise, from a gendered power relations perspective, the reasons why male elites seek to replicate the protector–protected binary to which supporters of the GCP such as Sheridan appeal. These persons draw on the way the state portrays the social construction of the female as the protected gender as logical as women are naturally vulnerable to attack. These policy debates highlight the popular myth that prevails in society, which imagines that all females possess physically weak bodies that cannot compete with the stronger male body.
Propaganda

The second way supporters of the GCP refer to the protector–protected binary is by arguing that it is inevitable the enemy will capture some of Australia’s female combat personnel during wartime and detain them as prisoners of war. The ‘logic’ behind this argument is that female ADF personnel are more likely to be taken prisoners of war if the ADF embeds these women into fighting units that engage the enemy in hand-to-hand confrontation. This is because the enemy captures most prisoners of war on the frontline theatre of warfare (e.g. ADA 2007). Female protectionism arguments defend the patriarchal order in the military institution in two ways. First, they argue that the state must continue to exclude women from engaging in all roles whose primary purpose is to engage the enemy face-to-face on the frontline during wartime. Second, they reinforce pre-existing cultural norms that imagine men as captors of vulnerable women in the domain of warfare (e.g. Stiehm 1982).

Supporters of the GCP argue that it is inevitable Australia’s military enemies will broadcast images of distressed female ADF prisoners of war for propaganda purposes (e.g. O’Connor 2001: NP). These images will distress Australia’s citizens and undermine domestic support for the ADF’s engagement in that offshore war, unless its contribution to this military campaign was imperative to ensuring Australia’s security (Smith 1990a). This version of female protectionism appeals to the generally accepted view that most of Australia’s citizens believe that it is unfair for the weaker gender to suffer the hardships and atrocities prisoners of war normally experienced when held captive by the enemy (Smith 1990a).
The so-called ‘logic’ underpinning female protectionism arguments is flawed. These policy discussions ignore the reality that Australia’s military enemies may capture female ADF support personnel embedded deep in the rear should Australia’s armed forces be unable to defend its frontlines during warfare. Australia’s military history records multiple cases where the enemy has captured female support personnel who served deep in the rear during wartime. This famously includes nursing sister Vivian Bullwinkel, whose story is prominent in Australia’s war narratives. Japan’s Imperial Military Forces detained Bullwinkel as a prisoner of war in 1942. Between 1942 and 1945, Bullwinkel was one of 32 Australian military nurses held captive by Japan’s Imperial Military Forces (ABC 2007; Norman and Angell 2000).

The Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women appeals to female protectionism arguments to defend the ADF’s GCP and this approach to debate is popular among ADF combat personnel and other Defence commentators (e.g. O’Connor 2001: NP). The Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women informs its audience that Iraqi State media broadcasted propaganda images of abused and traumatised female American prisoners of war during the 1991 Gulf War. Following the publication of these images, there was a decrease in domestic support among America’s civilian population for their armed forces engagement in the Gulf War. This discussion appeared in a commemorative booklet published in 2003 titled “Looking at Women in the Australian Defence Force”. The Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women, Senator Amanda Vanstone, is the author of the forward section of this document and this section includes an image of Senator Vanstone who is a senior Cabinet Minister. This content and approach to debate in this brochure is typical of how the state appeals to female protectionism arguments to justify enforcing the GCP. This digital booklet
celebrates the positive contributions Australia’s female Defence personnel have made to the Iraq War and the Afghanistan War. On page 3, this brochure outlines the reasons that justify Australia’s GCP. A part of this discussion explicitly refers to the problem of female protectionism and warns the reader that the enemy may capture female ADF personnel who work on the frontline. To illustrate this point, this passage mentions how Iraq’s armed forces captured a female US female military non-commissioned officer during the Gulf War. This passage refers to fixed gender roles and mentions that this woman was a young single mother:

One of the first Coalition *prisoners-of-war taken by the Iraqis was a young single mother of a two-year old child* [my emphasis], 30-year-old Shoshana Johnson. Originally trained as an army chef, the US Army maintenance unit she belonged to took a wrong turn outside Nasiriyah and *she was paraded some hours later, along with four male colleagues, on Iraqi television* [my emphasis] (The Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women 2003: 3).

The passage I cite above is evidence that female protectionism arguments often pose flawed arguments to defend the GCP. The American female prisoner referred to in the text above was a Chef in the US Armed Forces. Johnson was not a combat fighter, and this historical fact provides proof that the enemy may capture combat and non-combat classified personnel during warfare. This observation caused me to investigate the true reasons why defenders of the GCP seek to preserve this regime by referring to a social construction that imagines men as empowered protectors of the weaker gender on the world stage. Esteemed feminist international relations scholars such as Judith Hicks Stiehm (1982) draw this connection between power and gender and argue that female protectionism arguments exist to preserve the global domain of warfare as a patriarchal construct.
The statement I cite above published by the Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women implicitly informs its audience that Australia’s willingness to contribute to offshore wars in support of imperial powers such as the US underpins Australia’s long-term national security strategy. These discussions implicitly refer to the bio-power regime the state enforces over its military population. Australia’s Government acts to preserve the lives of its human population by signing multilateral Defence treaties with powerful nations such as the US. It also engages in offshore wars with these partners as a means of receiving protection from these nations it is unable to defend its territory and population from attack (e.g. Blaxland 2003: 492–518).

Another way defenders of the GCP problematise the social construction of ‘female protectionism’ is by arguing that female combat casualties on the battlefield will distract male combat personnel from performing their combat tasks as disciplined, docile fighters. During warfare, it is invariably more effective for combat personnel to fight the enemy and not to provide medical assistance or defend his colleagues who are seriously injured. It is the role of medics embedded in the frontline to attend to fallen fighters (Burton 1996: 88).

The ADF’s GCP documents argue that it is inevitable some male combat fighters will provide medical assistance or firepower protection for female combat personnel injured on the frontline, even if this intervention violates Defence policy. This topic is a popular theme in the ADF’s GCP documents published after The Quinn and Toulson Report (e.g. Burton 1996: ES viii, 10, 33, 37, 46; Dunn 1998: 10; Campbell 2000: 10). The Burton Report labels this argument the “The protection factor” (Burton 1996: 88). Burton’s discussion explores how men’s instincts to protect their vulnerable, injured female
colleagues can undermine the ADF’s combat effectiveness during warfare. Burton (1996: 88) elevates the prominence of this argument in her Report. She discusses female protectionism factors under a heading and uses bold font to emphasise this title. The words in this text header make explicit the connection between combat effectiveness and female protectionism: “The ‘protection’ factor: men’s protectiveness of women breaks down group cohesion efficiency” [original emphasis]” (Burton 1996: 88).

**Power over life and death**

Burton’s examination of the protection factor on page 88 of her Report explores multiple issues beyond the single topic of “unit cohesion” that appears in the header of her Report I cite above. These discussions are not embodied – they do not refer to the unable female martial body. I examine the way supporters of the GCP cite unit cohesion arguments in my next Chapter from a hegemonic masculinities standpoint. Burton’s discussion of ‘female distraction’ (*i.e.* female protectionism) issues on page 88 of her Report illustrates one way entrenched cultural norms imagine men as the gender that exercises power over life and death in the male-dominated domain of global warfare. Burton (1996: xi) refers to survey data she collected from ADF personnel during the mid-1990s via “focus groups”. She informs her audience that these surveys suggest it is unlikely the ADF can train male combatants to not aid or protect female colleagues injured on the battlefield. Burton (1996: 88) reports that “overwhelmingly” most “younger male Service members” stated they would assist or protect an injured female combat fighter. This intervention would occur even if the male combat personnel were aware that their actions violated Defence policy and could undermine their unit’s combat effectiveness:
Simulations referred to in focus groups suggest that while women obey all the rules in combat situations (they do not stop for a man who is lying down bleeding if it will interfere with mission effectiveness) the men do not (Burton 1996: 88).

This relatively brief statement by Burton further illustrates how male elites who defend the ADF’s GCP sometimes pose flawed arguments. For example, the ADF’s GCP documents repeatedly argue that the female martial mind is naturally unable to perform as a docile combat fighter. Burton reports that female combatants are more likely to obey a Defence policy that aims to maximise the ADF’s combat effectiveness during wartime. Burton’s statement highlights a popular argument that appears in the feminist interdisciplinary literature. Many feminists argue that the ADF enforces a GCP primarily because male Defence personnel actively resist the integration of women into their military institution, especially in frontline roles. These male personnel do this because they wish to preserve the masculine character of the armed forces and its core functional worksites and not because they believe woman cannot perform competently as combat fighters (e.g. Bridges 2005: 172). These contradictions in the evidence provide further support for the argument that a dominant reason why male elites defend the GCP is to preserve male dominance of warfare, which in turn replicates the patriarchal global order-of-power domestically and globally (Thornton 1990: 140).

Another way that supporters of the GCP argue the state must continue to enforce the bio-regulatory regime it enforces over the gendered combat body is by imagining men as the gender that exercises power over life and death decisions in the military domain. An example of this argument exists on page 88 of The Burton Report. Burton (1996: 88) portrays men as natural protectors of injured female combat fighters. She reinforces this social construction when she states that female combat personnel will not aid or protect
injured male colleagues on the battlefield. Burton’s discussion of female protectionism issues communicates a nuanced message to her audience that only men may exercise executive control over life and death decisions in Australia’s military institution and the domain of global warfare. The exercise of power over life and death in powerful state institutions is a defining feature of the state’s bio-power regime. Foucault (1978: 141) names the “army” and “police” as institutions that exercise control over life and death.

Supporters of the GCP claim that most or all women are also unsuitable for working in physically and mentally demanding roles such as frontline policing. Defenders of this regime argue that the state to preserve the bio-power regime it enforces over the gendered combat body, by contextualising the armed forces with another public institution that executes power and authority over who may die and who may live (e.g. Foucault 1978: 142–143). They purposefully contextualise their discussion of the military and constabulary forces because these powerful institutions are the ultimate guarantors of the patriarchal state (Brown 1992: 28). Police forces arm their personnel so that they may use violence to defend state power and authority. Policing institutions are masculine entities; men dominate the headcount and leadership of the constabulary forces of virtually all nations, including Australia (Ryan 2006). Defenders of the GCP seek to replicate male dominance of Australia’s military institution by imagining the male body as naturally suited to leading organisations that guarantee the protection of state.

The influence of Australia’s policing institutions extends beyond Australia’s domestic territory. In recent decades, police officers have engaged in offshore peacekeeping missions and military operations other than war in dangerous zones to stabilise civil
unrest and prevent civil war. Male and female uniformed personnel from the Australian Federal Police have engaged in peacekeeping missions in multiple nations including East Timor (1999–2000) and Papua New Guinea (Department of Veterans’ Affairs 2006: 96, 98). These examples show how Australia’s Federal Police force and its military institution engage in the patriarchal domain of international security. By contextualising the role of the military fighter with frontline policing duties, defenders of the GCP imagine the superior male body as naturally suited to controlling institutions of power on the global stage.

Michael O’Connor’s media statement is a representative example of how supporters of the ADF’s GCP argue that no or few women can reach the biophysical performance standards required of the competent police officer even though women work in these positions in Australia’s state, territory and federal police agencies. He argues that if the Australian Government reverses the GCP, this will severely diminish the operational performances of the ADF’s frontline military units (O’Connor 2001: NP). O’Connor’s opinion appears in a media release in 2001 and he makes these claims in his capacity as Executive Director of the Australian Defence Association. His statement occurs in response to the Australian Government commissioning The Patterson Report, a Defence inquiry that focuses exclusively on measuring male and female performances against biophysical competency standards the Australian Army imposes on combat personnel who serve in its Infantry Corps. O’Connor (2001: NP) argues that some female police officers appointed to Australia’s Police Forces could not reach the biophysical competencies required of the docile police officer. He also claims that an unspecified number of women gained entry into policing roles only because some of Australia’s state/territory governments lowered their physical entry standards to accommodate these
women, to promote gender equality in the public sector. This argument is evident from this extract of O’Connor’s media release:

As has happened in some [Australian] police forces [my emphasis], the task will be redefined to fit the equal opportunity drive regardless of the [detrimental] effect on the [combat] mission (Michael O’Connor, Executive Director Australian Defence Association, 2001: NP).

O’Connor’s statement above supports a Defence policy that bears the characteristics of the bio-power regime the state enforces over docile bodies that exercise power over life and death. He defends the GCP by contextualising the functions of two public institutions – the police and the armed forces. Foucault (1978: 141) argues that the state bestows these agencies with authority to exercise power over life and death. O’Connor (2001: NP) portrays policing services as institutions where the female body struggles to perform competently in core frontline roles that routinely expose these personnel to violence and danger in the normal course of their duties.

**Contact sports**

Supporters of the GCP likewise compare the high physical and mental demands imposed on combat personnel with the superior biophysical competencies required of men who compete in elite physical contact sports at the national and international level. Those who defend the GCP in this way argue that women’s bodies and minds are unable to achieve victory when they engage in the most violent and demanding contact sports against men. By posing this argument in the public domain, they replicate cultural images that portray the male body and mind as superior to the female body and mind. Such references to the international sporting arena illustrate how supporters of the GCP defend the domestic and global patriarchal institutional order-of-power.
The dominant theme in these discussions which contextualise combat duties and violent elite sports is that universal laws of nature is the dominant factor that explains why women are absent from the combat ranks of virtually all nations’ armed forces. These references to the international sporting arena imagine the female body as weak and unable. Supporters of the GCP argue that women do not compete against men in physically demanding, violent contact sports at the elite level, domestically and internationally, because no or few women could achieve victory if they compete against a man in a one-on-one duel.

Another dominant theme that recurs in these policy discussions that use sport as a metaphor is the notion of ‘fairness’. Supporters of the GCP claim it is unfair to allow women to engage in a physical duel with a man because most or all women would sustain serious injuries if they compete against a man in violent, physically intensive contact sports such as rugby and boxing. By using elite sports as a metaphor, defenders of the GCP argue that the state must preserve the bio-political regime it enforces over the gendered combat body in order to protect its human population. The thinly veiled message these discussions communicate to their audience is that the female body is unable to achieve glory for her nation if she were to compete in an all-male national sports team at the peak level. In this vein, supporters of the GCP imagine the male body as a superior performer when it engages in other male-dominated global arenas that bestow privileged cultural status on men such as elite sportsmen. Those who portray sport as a metaphor for combat fighting seek to defend patriarchal structures beyond the international domain of militarism and global warfare.
References to the social construction of masculinity and femininity feature prominently in policy discussions that contextualise combat and elite physical contact sports. Foucault’s theory of bio-power does not examine how or why the state preserves the social construction of masculinity and femininity to enforce its bio-regulatory regimes (e.g. Sawicki 1991). To understand fully the nuanced messages supporters of the GCP communicate when they contextualise sport and combat, I analyse the evidence using theory from various fields and sub-fields such as the sociology of sport, gender theory and the masculinities literature.

Connell’s body of work on ‘men and masculinities’ theorises how the social construction of masculinity and femininity plays a defining role in the gendering of most nations’ core power structures, including its civil–military relations:

*In military affairs* [my emphasis] the state apparatus is visibly constructing particular forms of masculinity [my emphasis] and regulating the relations between them, not as an incidental effect of its operations but as a vital precondition of them (Connell 1990: 529).

Masculinity and femininity are the most recognisable forms of gender identity (Connell 2001b: 32). There are multiple forms and hierarchies of masculinity (Connell 2000: 24). Differences between gendered bodies, gendered roles and gendered behaviour patterns are the dominant forces that shape the social construction of masculinity and femininity. Athleticism, muscularity, body strength and militarism are quintessential masculine constructs (Halberstam 1998: 1–8, 83–84; 267–275). Masculinity is not a static construct that defines the character of a society’s power relations. Social norms and attitudes towards the role and place of men and male elites may change over time (Connell 2000: 23). For example, a society’s tolerance towards the normality of male violence (e.g.
militarism) may wane over time. This may reduce the role violence plays in upholding and replicating male dominance in a defined time and space (Connell 2000: 25).

The RODC Report Part A examines the ways elite violent physical contact sports and combat service are naturalised as domains of male exclusivity, both domestically and globally. Discussion in this Report is representative of the manner in which other male elites defend the GCP by contextualising the gruelling demands imposed on athletes who compete in violent contact sports with Defence personnel who engage the enemy as combat fighters. Supporters of the GCP imagine these activities as being the natural and eternal domain of men because those who engage in this domain may be required to risk their lives when discharging their professional duties, especially during warfare. They argue that women who compete against men in violent domains such as elite contact sports and frontline warfare cannot survive because the female gendered body is physically inferior to the male body. In The RODC Report Part A, the Australian Army contextualises the brute physical demands imposed on bodies that compete in violent contact sports with those inflicted on the combat fighter during warfare. In this vein, this policy document uses violent sport as a metaphor for combat to justify the restrictions the state imposes on the female gendered martial body. The Australian Army contextualises its discussion of sport and the GCP in the part of The RODC Report Part A that explores the historical context of this regime. The Australian Army mentions how Australia’s state/territory anti sex discrimination laws provides exemptions to sporting institutions:

Some guidelines relevant to the Army, of [concerning its exemption from legislation on the grounds of] ‘genuine occupational qualifications’ are ... the essential [my emphasis] nature of a sporting activity calls for a man or a woman for reasons of strength, stamina or physique [my emphasis] (Australian Army 1978a: 26).
This passage of text I cite above from The RODC Report Part A is noteworthy. These sporting exemptions in state/territory legislation have no direct bearing on the ADF’s GCP as they do not concern military service. The Australian Army and not the legislators make this connection between the similar physical demands imposed on those who engage in extreme physical contact sports and combat service. This is another way supporters of Australia’s GCP use extreme sports as a metaphor to defend the biopolitical apparatus the state enforces over the gendered combat body in the military institution.

The contextualisation of the physical demands imposed on combat personnel and those who compete in violent contact sports at the elite level in the male code is not an isolated theme in The RODC Report Part A. In the section of this Report titled “Physiology” (Australian Army 1978a: 33), the Australian Army discusses how other nations’ armed forces subject female and male personnel to different training regimes. This passage mentions that in the United States Armed Forces, “women take unarmed combat and judo [training exercises] instead of boxing and wrestling”, where the latter two sports are training exercises undertaken by male US military personnel. These references to the United States are typical of how the ADF’s GCP documents suggest universal laws of nature explain the superior performances of the able male body and the discuss the similar gendered training regimes that exist in other nations’ armed forces as evidence to support their argument. In a nuanced manner, these statements defend the patriarchal global order-of-power, which in part exists because of the way cultural norms and representations portray the biophysical performances of the male body as superior to the subordinated inferior female body (e.g. Thornton 1990: 141).
This reference to boxing and wrestling in The RODC Report Part A is purposeful and conveys a manifest message about the elite biophysical capabilities of the male gendered body. Boxing and wrestling are widely considered to be among the most physically intense and violent contact sports played at the elite level. Moreover, men who compete in the male code in boxing and wrestling dominate sports coverage in domestic and international media. Relatively few women compete in boxing and wrestling and the media rarely broadcast the female code to national or international audiences. The prominence of men and the marginalisation of women in the international sporting arena is a factor that elevates the cultural status men enjoy at the local and global levels (Thornton 1990: 140–141; McGinnis et al. 2003). This form of male privilege is evident from how top ranked elite male sportsmen invariably earn a multiple of what the highest ranked female sportswomen earn in popular international sports such as tennis and golf (Flake et al. 2013).

By highlighting the way violent activities such as wrestling and combat are naturalised as quintessential masculine social constructions, supporters of the GCP replicate the way cultural images portray the professional fighter as a near-universal male archetype. The social construction of a female combatant in the nation’s mainstream consciousness would create an image of “female-masculinity” in the combat ranks of the armed forces (e.g. Halberstam 1998: 1–2, 83–84). This notion of a ‘female-masculinity’ remains a taboo in western societies (Halberstam 1998: 1–2). Those who portray this image in the public domain normally disguise it to avoid controversy or they imagine this social construction as abnormal, undesirable or inconsequential. By doing so, female masculinities are suppressed (Halberstam 1998: 20, 267–269).
If the ADF annulled its GCP and only appointed qualified, competent female combat personnel, it is inevitable that at least some of these female combat personnel would demonstrate their ability to perform effectively as frontline fighters during warfare. I have already established how Defence data provides scientific proof that some women can meet the biophysical competency standards required of Infantry combat personnel in the Australian Army (e.g. Patterson et al. 2005). Over time, a growing number of people in Australia’s civilian society and military institution no longer possess stereotypical opinions that the female combat body was naturally unable to perform as a competent fighter. Moreover, supporters of the GCP would find it difficult to defend their viewpoint that only the able male body can succeed in domains and occupations that engage in extreme physical violence at the national and international level (Thornton 1990: 140).

Male elites who support the GCP persistently reject the view that it is possible to create an able-bodied female masculinity in the ADF’s combat ranks that can compete successfully in the international domain. Policy discussions that centre on elite contact sports most frequently refer to gruelling physical demands imposed on rugby players who compete at the national and international level. Male elites argue that no female rugby player could ever compete successfully against any professional male rugby player. These men mention how no women compete in any male rugby team at the peak level such as Australia’s National Rugby League code. They also point to the fact no woman has ever represented Australia’s all-male Rugby sports teams in the League and Union codes.

Policy discussions that contextualise combat and elite violent contact sports are more prominent during the new millennium. This pattern in the evidence further illustrates
how those who defend the GCP have shifted their focus overwhelmingly towards differences between the biophysical performances of gendered bodies, including gendered martial bodies. This was evident in 2009 when male elites vigorously defended the need to enforce the ADF’s GCP in Australia’s print media. They did this by contextualising the gruelling demands imposed on those who competed in violent contact sports with the comparable demands required of those who engaged in combat service. These policy discussions occurred in response to a public announcement made by the Rudd Australian Government in 2009 that informed the public this administration supported the transition to gender-neutral combat admission standards (e.g. Combet in Dodd 2009).

Sheridan (The Australian 2009: NP) and James (in Murray 2009: NP) defend Australia’s GCP in the print media and their approach to debate is representative of the way other male elites who support this bio-political regime also imagine the female body as unable to compete in gruelling contact sports and frontline warfare. Sheridan’s statement is consistent with the way other male elites explicitly argue that the female body can never match men on the battlefield:

*Equality for women in war is lunacy* [my emphasis] ... I follow *rugby league, physically the most demanding of sports* [my emphasis] ... a couple of weeks ago the halfback Brett Kimmorley suffered a depressed fracture and cheekbone (Greg Sheridan, Senior Editor, The Australian 2009: NP).

The idea that you should throw all our female into *frontline infantry* [my emphasis] combat is just as silly as the idea that if you take out half the Wallabies [my emphasis] team and replace them with the top female rugby players [my emphasis] (Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Neil James, Director Australian Defence Association, in Murray 2009: NP).

One way a man may be bestowed with an elite masculine identity is by engaging in physically demanding sports such as rugby (Light and Kirk 2010) and frontline military
service (Barrett 1996: 129). Those who compete for their country in aggressive contact sports in the international domain enjoy high levels of masculine prestige (Klein 1988; Cole 1993: 77–78). James’s argument that no woman can compete successfully in Australia’s national rugby team the Wallabies, captures the essence of how supporters of the GCP seek to uphold patriarchal privilege in international arenas beyond Australia’s military institution and the realm of international security. These male elites wilfully imagine the male body is supreme. They aim to do this by contextualising references to the ADF and the Wallabies, because these institutions are patriarchal and enjoy a prominent status in Australia’s society. With few exceptions, women do not compete with men in the global domain of frontline warfare or elite contact sports. The nuanced message these elites communicate to their audience is that universal laws of nature explain why male privilege defines the broader culture of Australia’s military institution and the elevated status men enjoy in other powerful global organisations. Furthermore, only the able male body and mind can succeed in occupations that impose extreme physical and mental demands on those who engage in frontline duties (e.g. Thornton 1990: 140). This reality explains why men dominate institutions that make life and death decisions.

6.5 Conclusion

When examined through a Foucauldian ‘bio-power’ lens, policy arguments that imagine the male body as able to perform combat and the female body as unable to perform combat translate in institutional terms into power over command, especially in the armed forces and other agencies that exercise decision-making authority over life and death. State power is fundamentally masculine. Those who defend the bio-regulatory regime
the executive enforces over the gendered combat body seek to preserve and replicate male dominance of key institutions of the state, such as the armed forces. This analysis is lacking from prior studies that examine the reasons why Australia enforces a GCP and it is absent from policy accounts that explore the history of this gendered regime.

Supporters of the GCP who defer to biology defend gendered power relations that extend beyond the exclusion of women from combat service in Australia’s armed forces. This argument is evident from the way debates that focus on biology rarely acknowledge that independent bioscience research shows that some female bodies possess the physical and mental capacities required to perform as docile military fighters during wartime. The enforcement of the bio-political regime the state enforces over the gendered combat body communicates powerful symbolic messages that defend the pervasive manner in which men monopolise powerful roles that command significant authority. The persistence of Australia’s GCP reinforces deeply entrenched cultural stereotypes that essentialise men as the only gender that can secure the survival of the nation’s population, territory and values on the battlefield. Male supremacy and control over key institutions of power is socially embodied. Defenders of Australia’s GCP resort to the use of flawed biological arguments because their support for this regime seeks to defend their personal viewpoint about the role and place of women and men in the civilian society and military institution. These individuals fear that overturing Australia’s GCP will diminish male influence and the patriarchal order-of-power that exists in key public institutions such as the armed forces.

In my next chapter, I further develop my argument that the patriarchal order-of-power is embodied. I show how those who defend the hegemonic masculinity of combat service
likewise focus on the extreme mental and physical demands imposed on the land army combat soldier during warfare.
Chapter Seven  Hegemonic masculinity and militarism

7.1  Introduction

This chapter is about the hegemonic masculine culture that perpetually defines the combat corps, executive leadership and service-wide culture of Australia’s armed forces. By enforcing a GCP, the state aids the replication of the patriarchal character of Australia’s military institution. The persistence of a culture of all-male privilege in the ADF is the overarching social problem of concern to this thesis.

I use qualitative methods such as speech analysis to explore the messages defenders of the GCP communicate in the public domain. I examine documents such as press communiqués, media interviews and other data sources. This review of primary data sources enables me to understand how and why civilian and military elites persistently defend the privileges bestowed on the ADF’s all-male combat fighter. The ADF’s GCP documents remain at the forefront of my analysis. The arguments put forward in these Reports likewise seek to uphold the hegemonic masculinity in Australia’s military institution.

The ADF’s GCP embodies power relations between men and women, particularly in Australia’s armed forces. This gendered regime is a command structure that remains fundamentally institutionalised as control over Australia’s Defence personnel, especially women and homosexual masculinities. This subordination of women to men persists in Australia’s civilian society and military institution and the global gendered order-of-power. The state is complicit in upholding this patriarchal structure of power and key
state institutions remain permeated by hegemonic masculinity. Men articulate male privilege throughout Australia’s armed forces by resisting policy changes that partially or fully reverse the GCP.

My review of the social embodiment of physicality, risk and other cultural practices is not a dominant focus of this chapter as I have explored these issues from a bio-regulation standpoint in the previous chapter. The original contribution of this chapter focuses on how the state purposefully and systematically upholds male privilege in Australia’s military institution. I aim to show how the state regulates the management of large-scale violence in a manner that upholds institutional hegemonic masculinity in the local, regional and global order-of-power.

Other studies establish the hegemonic masculine structures of Australia’s armed forces. Agostino (1997) explores the hegemonic masculine features of the RAN’s service-wide culture. Wadham (2003) likewise examines hegemonic masculinity that exists in Australian Army’s combat corps and its service-wide culture (Wadham 2003). Establishing the foundations of hegemonic masculinity that exists in Australia’s armed forces is therefore not an explicit objective of this chapter. In contrast to these two Australian studies, my discussion explores how and why men, especially male elites from Australia’s civilian society and military institution, dominate public debates that defend the pre-existing hegemonic masculinity of the ADF’s service-wide culture and its combat ranks in particular.
These male elites articulate the hegemonic masculinity of the ADF in two ways that overlap conceptually. The first is by replicating cultural ideals that uphold a hierarchy of masculinities in the military institution, which in turn acts as a domain of male-exclusive privilege. The second way is by defending a viewpoint that portrays the management of large-scale violence as a male prerogative as a means of preserving and replicating the order-of-power that elevates men and subordinates women in key institutions at the domestic, regional and global levels.

This chapter contains two discussion parts, 7.2 and 7.3. I use Connell and Messerschmidt’s (2005) revised theory of hegemonic masculinities to analyse evidence and identify the themes to which elites appeal when they defend Australia’s GCP. The first Section, 7.2, provides historical context. This discussion establishes how those who support the GCP actively defend the pre-existing hegemonic masculine structures of the ADF’s combat corps. This analysis reaffirms the conceptual argument that hegemonic masculinity is not self-replicating (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 844). Men who benefit most from the patriarchal order-of-power that prevails in Australia’s civilian society and military institution actively seek to reproduce the hegemonic masculine power structures that exist in the ADF.

Discussion in Section 7.2 shows how defenders of the ADF’s GCP seek to preserve the entrenched naturalisation of militarism and warfare as hegemonic masculine constructs. This discussion contains three separate interrelated sub-parts. In this section, I show how supporters of the GCP highlight the way military service, especially frontline military service, is naturalised in society as a male-exclusive privilege. The cultural idealisation of elevated forms of masculinity is normally a defining feature that characterises the
hierarchy of hegemonic masculinities that prevails within a social formation (e.g. Connell 1998a: 69; 2001b: 39) especially in the martial context (Barrett 1996: 130).

I next explore how defenders of the GCP conspire to subordinate martial femininities and other ‘inferior’ masculinities to the entrenched hierarchy of multiple masculinities that prevails in Australia’s armed forces. The cultural, political and economic subordination of women and subordinated masculinities to elite masculinities is a defining feature of the hierarchy of elite masculine structures that prevail in the local, regional and global domains (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 832, 844, 846).

In the third sub-part of Section 7.3, I show how male elites argue that “cultural consent” in favour of enforcing Australia’s GCP exists because most civilians and military personnel in Australia and other western nations support the enforcement of this regime. The existence of cultural consent is a defining feature of hegemonic masculinity that exists locally, regionally and globally (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 846).

Those who defend the hegemonic masculinity in the ADF’s combat corps and its service-wide culture ultimately seek to preserve the patriarchal order-of-power that prevails in Australia, regionally and globally. Supporters of the GCP persistently argue that the management of large-scale global violence is the natural preserve of men. Absolute male dominance of warfare and aggression is almost universal and this explains why the state masculinises the combat ranks of its military force. In a similar vein, the state justifies the way it promotes masculinity as a core identity in the ADF’s combat ranks by arguing that it is essential to maintain an all-male combat force to ward off global danger.
7.2 Cultural idealisation and replication

Naturalised masculinity

Hegemonic masculinities are not self-reproducing; they are fluid across time and space. Male elites and other men who benefit most from the patriarchal dividends these masculinities bestow on the male population are complicity in replicating this gendered power structure (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 832, 839). These men challenge the arguments posed by competing interests groups who reject the GCP, such as liberal rights feminists.

Defenders of the ADF’s GCP actively seek to preserve this regime by reinforcing the way the state and the nation’s cultural institutions imagine frontline military service as an anti-feminine construct, an institution where male privilege is naturalised. This behaviour in the public domain is noteworthy from a hegemonic masculinities perspective. Cultural ideals that elevate the prestige of male-exclusive institutions are normally a dominant influence that uphold and replicate hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2000: 29; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 842) especially in a military force’s all-male combat units (Barrett 1996). The state masculinises the organisational culture of its military apparatus. This behaviour is wilful and persistent as the executive seeks to preserve the deeply rooted culture of male privilege that characterises the martial domain (Connell 1990: 529).
The Quinn and Toulson Report captures the manner in which the ADF’s GCP documents justify the historical enforcement of this regime by imagining combat service as an exclusive, *elite* privilege that remains the natural domain of men:

Another aspect of this argument [to exclude women from combat service] is the assertion that any policy to put women into combat would be to destroy the *elitist* [my emphasis] notions that motivate combat performance, and the justification of the sacrifice it entails. The [all male] soldiers *therefore have nothing to fight for* [my emphasis] [if the GCP is reversed]. The notion that the manipulation of men’s anxiety about their sexual identity is one of the most powerful and important motivators to fight is significant in relation to *elitism* [my emphasis] (Quinn and Toulson 1987: 7).

This statement by Quinn and Toulson above conveys a nuanced message to its audience that enforcing the GCP is necessary to attract and retain sufficient numbers of male combat fighters who are inspired to fight on the frontline. The text I cite above states that male combat personnel need a worthy cause to motivate them to fight to the maximum of their ability. The tone of The Quinn and Toulson Report is consistent with how the ADF’s GCP documents use strong language (e.g. “powerful”) to defend the exclusive form of male privilege bestowed on the combat fighter. In the next sentence Quinn and Toulson (1987: 7) develop their argument that it is imperative the ADF can motivate male combat personnel. Quinn and Toulson (1987: 7) argue that the elite male identity of the combat soldier is partially explained by the fact that “one of the most *powerful and important motivators* [my emphasis] [for men] to fight is significant in relation to *elitism*” [my emphasis]. This passage illustrates how Quinn and Toulson use manifest language to reinforce the way they portray the exclusive status bestowed on the all-male combat fighter as a dominant factor that defines the masculine culture of the combat ranks of TTCP member nations such as Australia.

One subtle way the state imagines combat service as an elite domain of male privilege is by publicly justifying incremental policy changes that relax Australia’s GCP as an action
of last resort. Since 1990, the state has persistently claimed that it authorises the integration of women into armed combat-related roles partially because the ADF has been unable to recruit and retain sufficient male personnel over the long-term, especially in the Australian Army. This reference to the ADF’s recruitment and retention crisis was evident in 1997 when David Anderson (1997: NP) prepared a report for the Australian Parliament that provided an update of Defence Personnel service conditions and how changing social contexts alter these terms. Chapter 12 of this Report is titled “Women in Defence” (Anderson 1997: NP) and around half of the content of this chapter explores the history and status of Australia’s GCP. The date of this parliamentary document precedes the release of The Ferguson Report by one year. It is evident that the ADF’s persistent long-term recruitment and retention crisis is a factor that influenced Australia’s Defence Ministry to review the status of its GCP. The enforcement of this regime potentially exacerbates the ADF’s headcount shortfall as it excludes around half of Australia’s population from applying for around half of all Defence positions. In his capacity as Chair of the Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Committee, Anderson (1997: NP) discusses this development under a header titled “The Opening of Combat-Related Positions”. Directly under this header, he explicitly informs his audience that the ADF integrated women into combat-related roles during the 1990s partially because:

The separation crisis [my emphasis] of the late 1980s highlighted the need for the ADF to make best use of the talents of its servicemen and women [my emphasis] if it was to compete effectively as a prospective employer in a competitive society (Anderson 1997: NP).

Other Australian parliamentarians link the chronic recruitment and retention problems that persist in the Australian Army to the announcement made by the Australian Government in 2005 that it shall partially relax the GCP in Artillery Units. During this year, the Australian Government instructed the Australian Army to appoint suitably qualified female applicants into a limited number of roles in this service’s Artillery
Corps that officially hold Direct Combat status. In reality, these duties support Artillery personnel who work closer to the frontline theatre of warfare (e.g. Kelly in ABC 2005a). The two representative statements below that cite senior Australian Federal parliamentarians interviewed by ABC News reflect how the state and the Federal Opposition portray the frontline as a male-exclusive construct. They do this by imagining the integration of female ADF personnel into combat-related roles as a policy of last resort to address chronic and persistent personnel shortages:

Defence Personnel Minister Deanne Kelly says Cabinet is considering the proposal [to integrate women into a limited number of Artillery roles in the Australian Army] and she supports it. She says it could help overcome the Army’s recruitment problems [my emphasis]. “All of these things [i.e. the partial relaxation of the GCP] are a response to attracting generation Y to take up a career in our defence forces (Deanne Kelly, Assistant Defence Minister quoted in ABC 2005a: NP).”

The Government made the decision to allow women into frontline [land army] units following a request from the ADF. The Federal Opposition’s defence spokesman Robert McClelland, says the decision has been made out of necessity rather than [gender equality] principle. “There’s clearly a skills shortage in the Defence Force’s [my emphasis] he [McClelland] said (Robert McClelland, Shadow Defence Minister, cited in ABC 2005a: NP).”

These statements and others like them communicate a latent message that the gendered ‘glass-ceiling’ persists in the ADF. They also inform the public in a subtle way that the ADF’s GCP will be partially relaxed only as a last resort. This argument is evident from how the executive has on occasion opened a small number of combat-oriented roles to women and has linked this policy change to its desire to alleviate dire headcount shortages in that mustering. The state’s reluctance to declassify combat-oriented roles upholds Australia’s military institution as a so-called ‘last bastion’ of absolute male privilege.
Male bonding

Another way in which defenders of the GCP seek to replicate combat roles as a male-exclusive privilege is by arguing that the integration of any number of women into the ADF’s combat ranks automatically undermines the cohesiveness and effectiveness of this service’s combat corps. These cohesiveness arguments also refer to synonyms, in the context of frontline military service such as morale, male bonding and *esprit de corps*. These terms describe the team spirit cultivated in an all-male frontline military work environment and the way this works as an organising principle that upholds the disciplined functioning of the military institution (*e.g.* Knight 2013: 58). ADF male personnel routinely argue that the integration of any number of female fighters into the combat unit inevitably undermines the team dynamic and functional performance of this workspace (*e.g.* Agostino 1998b: 65). The manner in which these elites persistently reject the creation of a female combat fighter illustrates how those who defend hegemonic masculinity structures often “discredit alternatives” (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 844) to the status quo of gender relations. The objective of these attacks against policy alternatives seeks to replicate hegemonic masculinity in the ADF’s frontline workspaces (*e.g.* Agostino 2003: 110–114).

I explored policy debates that focus on maximising the ADF’s fighting capacity in the previous chapter from a bio-regulation perspective. In contrast to the evidence I analysed in the previous chapter, the references to ‘bonding’, ‘cohesiveness’ and related themes I examine in this chapter rarely make direct or indirect connections to issues that concern the performance of the gendered martial body. This evidence is distinguishable from bio-power debates as policy discussions centre on defending male privilege that perpetually defines the ADF’s combat services and this institution’s service-wide culture.
This reference to the male-exclusive culture of the ADF’s combat corps is evident when Senior Combat Officer (Special Operations) Lieutenant Colonel Knight (2013: 58) defends the need to enforce the GCP in the Australian Army in a 21-page article published in the *Australian Army Journal* Winter edition in 2013. The title of this article is “Sexuality, Cohesion, Masculinity and Combat Motivation: Designing Policy to Sustain Capability”. This article responds to the partial relaxation of the GCP that occurred on 1 January 2013. Knight (2013: 60) does not centre his discussion on whether the female martial body can meet the biophysical standards required of the competent combat fighter. His article focuses strongly on his concern about “cohesion”, as evident in the way he uses the word “cohesion” five times in his Abstract. He also includes the word “cohesion” in the title of his article. His use of the word ‘cohesion’ six times in these two sections is explicit and portrays this issue an important rationale that justifies enforcing the GCP. This is evident in this passage from his Abstract, where he cites the word “cohesion” three times. The core message Knight poses in this section is that feminising the Army’s combat units is risky, because the ADF cannot “trust” that male and female personnel will not engage in intimate liaisons that will diminish the cohesiveness of the combat corps:

Effective [female] integration [into combat] therefore appears to require careful adjustment of Army’s methods of building team *cohesion* [my emphasis]. Furthermore, even gender-neutral approaches to generating the *cohesion* [my emphasis] that is so vital for combat arms will not change the potential for sexual interaction that mixing genders creates. The social dynamics involved represent some level of risk to the trust on which *cohesion* [my emphasis] depends (Lieutenant Colonel Charles Knight, Special Operations Combat Command, Australian Army, 2013: 58).

Barrett’s (1996: 130) pioneering research explores the masculine culture of the US Navy, establishing how martial hegemonic masculinities are a process that *creates* normal and ideal militaristic images (Barrett 1996: 130). I build on Barrett’s research and show how in the ADF context male elites imagine male bonding as a cultural ideal that underpins
hegemonic masculinity in the ADF’s combat ranks. Those individuals who refer to male bonding arguments to defend the GCP seek to *replicate* pre-existing martial norms and ideals. This evidence supports the argument that hegemonic masculinities are “not a self-reproducing system” (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 844). Elites and other men actively preserve this patriarchal power structure as they benefit most from the male privilege that dominates the masculine culture of Australia’s armed forces.

In a similar vein to Knight (2013), The Ferguson Report, The Campbell Report and The Holden and Tanner Report likewise make prominent their argument that the creation of a female combat fighter automatically undermines team cohesion, which in turn erodes military effectiveness to a degree that risks the ADF’s fighting capacities. In its Executive Summary, The Holden and Tanner Report explains that a perception persists within Defence that “women being fully integrated within the ADF” can cause problems because “women’s presence in the military will impede cohesion, morale, and discipline (Holden and Tanner 2001: v).”

The Ferguson Report discusses cohesiveness arguments under a dedicated section header titled “The integration of women into combat trades, currently excluded to women, would *disrupt unit cohesion* [my emphasis] and *lower morale* [my emphasis]” (Dunn 1998: 9). This document elevates the prominence of this discussion about cohesion and morale by using a subtitle that explicitly informs the reader why the integration of women into combat ostensibly lowers morale among combat personnel. The Campbell Report provides an extended discussion of ‘male bonding’ factors and elevates its discussion of ‘cohesion’ by analysing this issue under a sub-heading titled “Bonding and Cohesiveness”. The Campbell Report examines issues concerning bonding and cohesion
under a main section of this document titled “Sociological Issues”. Campbell (2000: 9–10) dedicates six paragraphs over two pages to explore how the cohesiveness factor traditionally influences those who support enforcing the GCP. The opening sentence of this section captures the central argument related to bonding and cohesion issues:

Opponents of women in combat frequently refer to the possible detrimental effects gender integration may have on unit cohesiveness [my emphasis] and the process of male bonding [my emphasis] (Campbell 2000: 9).

The Ferguson Report and The Campbell Report both acknowledge that there is no proof that integrating women into combat service automatically undermines group dynamics. Both documents merely acknowledge that defenders of the GCP cite this argument to justify their support for the enforcement of this regime (Dunn 1998: 9; Campbell 2000: 9–10). This evidence further supports my argument that the GCP documents published after The Quinn and Toulson Report shift their discussion away from social and cultural factors to defend this regime.

Policy discussions that argue male bonding is essential to maximise military effectiveness in combat units routinely appear in public statements made by male elites, especially those with current or former ADF combat experience. For example, Combat Officer, Major (Australian Army) Scott Davison explores the argument that the integration of female combat personnel into the frontline automatically diminishes the ‘cohesiveness’ in this work environment. Furthermore, he explains how this argument exerts influence over policy makers who support enforcing Australia’s GCP. The language he uses in this section of his discussion reaffirms my argument that those who support the GCP often do so because it reflects their personal opinion with concerns to the role and place of women in the military institution:
The argument runs that women affect combat effectiveness in that their very presence [my emphasis] diminishes unit readiness, cohesion and morale [my emphasis] (Major Scott Davison, Royal Australian Armour Corps 2007: 67).

Davison’s use of the words “very presence” conveys a manifest meaning that most male combat personnel reject the integration of any number of women fighters into the ADF’s combat corps. Supporters of the GCP argue that these attitudes towards female combat personnel among male personnel prevail regardless of the skills and net positive contribution any individual female combatant brings to the ADF’s combat corps. This mindset imagines combat service as the natural privilege of men and by doing so, replicates male exclusivity and hegemonic masculinity in the ADF’s combat units (e.g. Agostino 1997: 20–21).

The evidence I present below shows how male combat personnel who defend the GCP by citing male bonding arguments are invariably less diplomatic and more emotional with their choice of language than the ADF’s GCP documents. The ADF’s GCP documents merely note how historically male bonding is a factor that influences Defence policy makers and others who support the GCP. I argue that these male personnel use strong emotional language because they relate to what Connell (2002: 141) terms “a sense of elite membership”. This refers to the esteemed status they personally experience from combat service. This notion of ‘elite membership’ is a defining feature that characterises a hegemonic masculine power structure. I argue that male elites who benefit from this privilege fiercely defend the elevated status the GCP bestows on men who serve the ADF as combat fighters.
Barrett’s (1996: 136) US Navy study demonstrates how this notion of elite male prestige is a common element of the multiple hegemonic masculinities that may exist in a modern military force. Defence personnel who work in the riskiest frontline roles normally enjoy an elevated level of masculine prestige than do those who engage in less risky military roles. The masculine prestige bestowed on military personnel who work in combat-support is higher than the status of those men who work in administrative support roles deep in the rear. Barrett’s research translates to the Australian context. ADF personnel who defend the GCP frequently refer to this notion of ‘elite membership’ to justify their support for this regime and these arguments rarely refer to the limitations of the female gendered combat body to support their position.

Statements provided by multiple RAN sailors to researcher Katarina Agostino in qualitative interviews she conducted in the mid-1990s explicitly refer to the role male bonding plays in upholding hegemonic masculinity in their military institution. These discussions are representative of the manner in which many male personnel from the ADF’s tri-services vigorously defend the importance of maintaining male bonding in the ADF’s frontline units. They are also representative of how these sailors personalise their argument by citing specific details concerning their own frontline military experiences. These naval personnel imagine male bonding as a social construction that automatically diminishes when the military integrates women into frontline workspaces such as the “Bridge” on a navy frigate or on a combat orientated environment such as a ship deployed to sea:

We men have always seen this sort of male bonding [my emphasis] as important to the [frontline] defence of the nation. If you can’t bond [my emphasis] with your mate [my emphasis] you can’t win a war basically. You cannot change that [masculine exclusive culture] overnight, especially on the Bridge. Look in the really masculine [my emphasis] sphere of the ship, like the Bridge, I don’t think it will ever change to accommodate [combat officer] females. I just can’t imagine a female captain of a DDG (Guided Missile Destroyer) or a FFG (Guided Missile Frigate). Maybe that’s my
own masculinity [my emphasis] getting in the way [my emphasis], but I cannot see it ever happening. Women just can’t bond with men the way that men can with men [my emphasis] (RAN Sailor ‘Mike’ in Agostino 1998b: 66).

Guys bond [my emphasis] better, especially in tough situations like life at sea [my emphasis] ... You need that sort of bonding [my emphasis] if you are going to get through (RAN Sailor ‘Stephen’, Naval Executive Officer in Agostino 1998b: 65).

The two statements I cite above are representative of the way ADF combat personnel reiterate the importance they place on male bonding when they support the GCP and defend frontline military service as a domain of absolute male privilege. The personal testimony provided by RAN sailor Mike above captures the way that the marginalisation of martial femininities is a defining characteristic of hegemonic masculine power structures in Australia’s armed forces (Agostino 1998b: 65) and other western nations’ armed forces (e.g. Kimmell 1994: 126; Barrett 1996: 130). Mike’s repetition of the phrases “cannot see it ever happening” and “I don’t think it will ever change” uses manifest language to reinforce the way combat service is naturalised in Australia’s civilian society and military institution as the eternal domain of men. Furthermore, he suggests that women will never gain access to or succeed in this bastion of all-male privilege.

My research elaborates further on Barrett’s US Navy study. I show how defenders of Australia’s GCP cite the importance of preserving the ADF’s unique male-exclusive mateship culture. These men argue that mateship is a dominant factor that causes male fighters to bond in all-male combat units. They also claim that preserving the ADF’s mateship culture in its frontline units is essential to maximising the ADF’s combat effectiveness.
Male ADF personnel with combat service dominate these debates. They argue that the influence mateship exerts over the combat units *esprit de corps* is only effective if Australia’s military institution preserve this cultural institution as an exclusively masculine construct. The Burton Report cites evidence from qualitative interviews she conducts with Australia’s Defence personnel and this data captures the essence of how defenders of the GCP refer to issues about mateship to support their position. This discussion occurs over five pages under a sub-header titled “Obstacles to male/female bonding” (Burton 1996: 87). Burton concludes a mindset prevails in the ADF that:

The social life of a unit or section plays a part in or becomes an obstacle to the bonding [my emphasis] process. In particular the bond [my emphasis] between males (whether as a group or ‘best mates’ [my emphasis]) which are often formed or enhanced by their social activities can impede male/female bonding [my emphasis] since they exclude women (Burton 1996: 91).

Male ADF personnel in the Australian Army, especially those with combat experience dominate discussions that argue that Australia’s military institution must preserve mateship as an exclusively male construction, especially within combat units. These men personally experience the way mateship is a cultural force strongly associated with Australia’s Land Army Combat Corps. The creation of Australia’s national consciousness at Gallipoli was an all-male event and these Army soldiers bore a sense of duty to protect their mates from the enemy on the frontline (Garton 1998). Men who defend the GCP in this vein have a personal attachment to the cultural institution of mateship and this explains why the voices of male Army personnel, especially those with combat experience, dominate these debates (e.g. Phelps 1997).

Senior psychologist Lieutenant Colonel (Australian Army) A. J. Cotton (1997: 96) argues the culture of male elitism that prevails in Australia’s armed forces is rooted in the male-exclusive origins of Australia’s mateship. He restricts his discussion of
mateship to the Australian Army’s Combat Corps. Cotton argues this point in a refereed paper he presented at the International Military Testing Association Conference in Canberra in 1997. His testimony is noteworthy as Cotton holds senior rank in the Australian Army and is a qualified, practicing military psychologist. Cotton’s experience as an Army psychologist provides him with first-hand insight into the psyche that prevails in Australia’s most male-dominated military service. In this paper, Cotton (1997: 96) argues:

*Mateship* [my emphasis] is so much a part of the [Australian] *army’s culture* [my emphasis] ... the gender of the warriors in the Army, while perhaps still somewhat contentious, is enshrined in the limitation of combat to males only.

The way Jim Wallace defends the GCP is typical of the way other men with experience in Australia’s armed forces draw positive connections between the themes ‘mateship’, ‘cohesion’ and ‘military effectiveness’ and centre their arguments on the ways that mateship and cohesion maximise the fighting capacities of the Australian Army. Wallace is a former Infantryman who served in the Australian Army and the ADF’s elite SAS combat service. These men persistently argue that women’s presence in the ADF’s frontline workspaces automatically diminishes mateship and morale. This outcome is risky as it might reduce the combat effectiveness of the ADF’s capacity to the extent this institution cannot protect Australia’s citizens and national interests. This theme is dominant in public statements that respond to the announcement made by Australia’s Defence Minister Stephen Smith in 2009 that his administration plans to reverse the ADF’s GCP. Wallace repeats the theme “morale” when he informs ABC Radio journalist Samantha Hawley:
The RSL is strongly opposed to the move and one former SAS commander says *morale* and *mateship* would be destroyed if women were allowed to serve in that [combat] capacity (Hawley 2009: NP) … It’s about *morale* [my emphasis], it’s about team *cohesion* [my emphasis] and in the Australian case, our army has always distinguished itself mainly because at the very core of each team, there’s a strong *mateship* [my emphasis] (SAS Commander (retired) Jim Wallace, quoted in ABC 2009: NP).

Wallace’s statement above highlights and appeals to the interconnection between the institution of mateship and the all-male spirit of unit cohesion which defines the dynamics of the male-exclusive combat corps in Australia’s military institution (*e.g.* Buttsworth 2003: 135). Wallace explicitly defends the need to preserve these two social forces – mateship and unit cohesion – as constructions that resist partial feminisation. Excluding Australia’s female Defence personnel from the institution of mateship thereby replicates hegemonic masculinity in the ADF’s combat corps and elevates the masculine status of men who serve in this domain, because women do not participate in frontline work roles in a national institution that wields formidable political and cultural power.

**Visibility**

In a similar vein to policy debates that centre on mateship, critical mass arguments reinforce in the public domain the way in which women’s absence from the ADF’s combat services is naturalised as a deeply entrenched cultural norm. These references to women’s invisibility in the ADF’s combat service are another way defenders of the GCP seek to replicate hegemonic masculinity in the ADF’s combat ranks. Supporters of the GCP argue that this institution will never achieve or sustain a so-called “critical mass” of female combat personnel (*e.g.* Burton 1996: 60). These arguments persist in the public domain and provide further evidence that hegemonic masculinities are not a self-reproducing system. Men who benefit most from the privileges that hegemonic masculinity bestows on male elites are the most vigorous defenders of the social
structures that underpin the hierarchy of masculinities that exist within a defined setting (e.g. Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 844) such as the military institution (Barrett 1996).

The Campbell Report defines “critical mass” as relating to the following two concerns, insofar as this term relates to the integration of women into combat service:

In the present context, critical mass [my emphasis] refers to the degree of representation [of women appointed to individual combat units] necessary to ensure successful integration of women into a previously all male environment (Campbell 2000: 14).

Research has shown that women’s visibility [my emphasis] in male dominated workplaces can lead to special performance pressures, especially in jobs not traditionally occupied by women (Campbell 2000: 17).

Those who defend the GCP by focusing on the problem of critical mass argue that female personnel are unlikely to succeed as combat fighters unless the ADF can sustain an unspecified minimum ratio of male-to-female combat personnel in each combat workspace (e.g. Dunn 1998: 18). Those who cite the problem of critical mass argue that male personnel will attack female personnel (e.g. physically, sexually) whenever the ratio of male combat personnel to female combat personnel is too high. This outcome is likely to occur as the absence of a female support network alienates women and makes female personnel more vulnerable to attack from their male colleagues (e.g. Campbell 2000: 14). Discussions concerning the problem of critical mass appear in Defence policy documents published after the ADF first integrated female personnel into combat-related roles in 1990 (e.g. Holden and Tanner 2001: v). A significant number of male ADF personnel perpetrated sexual, physical and emotional abuse towards female ADF personnel in the early 1990s. These incidents were more prevalent in units that accepted female personnel for the first time during the 1980s, in response to the ADF disbanding
the Auxiliary women’s services and integrating women into the Regular Corps (e.g. ADF 1993; Bryson 1994).

The Campbell Report partly elevates its discussion of low female to male ratios as it explores these issues under a sub-section with a header titled “Critical Mass” (Campbell 2000: 14–15). This passage examines the problem of low female visibility in the combat services over seven paragraphs that span two pages of this Report. Campbell (2000: 15) presents a ‘no win’ outcome for women if the state reverses the GCP. She argues that male combat personnel will also attack female combat personnel if women achieve representation levels in the ADF’s combat ranks that are significantly lower or higher than unspecified critical mass ratios. She speculates that male combat personnel will attack female combat personnel when large numbers of female personnel work in a combat unit because:

with increased representation the [ADF’s combat classified] women can pose a greater threat to the majority [of male combat personnel] and are likely to experience more rather than less negative attention from the majority of [male ADF combat service] members (Campbell 2000: 15).

I argue that the nuanced message Campbell’s statement communicates in the quote above is that any level of female participation in the ADF’s combat ranks is incompatible with the culture of male privilege that defines the ADF’s combat service. Campbell (2000: 14–15) argues that female ADF combat personnel cannot succeed in frontline units even where they comprise the overwhelming majority of any individual combat work unit. This viewpoint reinforces the way that women’s absence in the ADF’s combat ranks is naturalised. This in turn portrays combat roles as a male prerogative and a domain that men shall eternally monopolise. A defining feature of hegemonic masculinity is the way in which male elites defend the privileged status bestowed on the
male body within patriarchal institutions that enjoy significant cultural power (e.g. Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 852).

Senior male ADF personnel with combat status and senior male Australian Federal Parliamentarians likewise cite the problem of critical mass to defend the GCP. In contrast to The Campbell Report, these male elites focus exclusively on the problems that will occur because of women’s low participation levels in the combat ranks. For example, against the backdrop of the publication of The Ferguson Report and The Campbell Report, Scott (1999) and Barrie (2000) argue that the GCP cannot be overturned unless the ADF can sustain a critical mass of female personnel in each combat workspace. Both men pose their arguments in a public speech before a live audience and the objective of both presentations is to justify the reasons why the state enforces the GCP. Both officials show purpose in the way they argue that critical mass factors influence the enforcement of the GCP because they do not make their statements ‘on the fly’. The transcripts of these speeches appear on their Ministerial websites, is evidence these statements made in the public domain communicate policy messages with intent. Scott (1999: NP) and other Federal parliamentarians and senior executives from the ADF and Australia’s Department of Defence argue that critical mass issues are a core challenge Australia’s armed forces must surmount before it can open combat roles to women. This is evident when Scott (1999: NP) and Barrie (2000: NP) state:

This may mean that we need a critical mass [my emphasis] of women in given specialisations or units [as a prerequisite] to consider opening up some [combat work] areas to women (Assistant Defence Minister Bruce Scott, 1999: NP).

Now let me talk about the issue of women in combat ... I think there will be a management issues to work through how ‘critical mass’ [my emphasis], education and support requirements can be managed (Admiral Chris Barrie, Chief of the ADF, 2000: NP).
Another subtle way the state, Defence leaders and the media seek to replicate male exclusivity and male privilege in the ADF and its frontline work environments is by referring to certain female ADF personnel as ‘trailblazers’. The media responds to the integration of women into roles and ranks traditionally occupied only by men. Female ADF personnel are labelled ‘trailblazers’ if they are the first woman to be appointed into a particular job category, especially a support role that bears arms and normally engages closer to the frontline during warfare than those who work in the rear such as nurses and administrative assistants. They are also labelled ‘trailblazers’ if they are the first to reach a certain senior officer rank in a specific mustering within the ADF’s tri-services (e.g. Campbell 2000: 18).

Calling female personnel ‘trailblazers’ reinforces pre-existing cultural norms that imagines the ADF’s frontline work areas, leadership ranks and service-wide culture as the natural preserve of men. The use of this word reinforces the reality that some male ADF personnel create obstacles to impede the ability of female personnel to succeed in their institution, especially in armed combat-support roles and leadership roles. Moreover, it simultaneously suggests that few women are able to surmount these obstacles because the media places a spotlight on the exceptional female personnel who succeed (e.g. Burton 1996: 96, Smart 1998: 427; Campbell 2000: 18).

Prior to 1996, it was ADF policy to issue a press release to announce key milestones achieved by Australia’s female Defence personnel for the first time. Clare Burton (1996: 143) advised Australia’s Defence Executive that this policy was counterproductive to the ADF’s ability to attract, retain and develop female personnel. This policy also
undermined women’s ability to achieve gender equality in the ADF, especially in roles traditionally dominated by male personnel. As argued by Burton (1996: 143), this policy reinforces perceptions that women’s careers are not progressing at a satisfactory pace in the ADF:

It is important to change the [ADF’s] public relations strategy. As mentioned previously, (chapter 4, section 4.5.2 on women’s visibility) the media spotlight on individual women is not serving its purpose. To have a single woman as an indicator of progress is more likely to send a message to other women that progress is slow [my emphasis].

Defence and Government leaders continue to label female ADF personnel as ‘trailblazers’ and these statements persist after Burton (1996: 143) recommended that this behaviour cease. For example, in the historical context section of his speech, Assistant Defence Minister Bruce Scott states that female ADF personnel have “blazed a trail [my emphasis] for themselves through often difficult terrain (Scott 1999: NP).” Scott’s speech offers a historical account of the GCP and he does not indicate that the Coalition Australian Government plans to reverse the GCP. Scott (1999: NP) presented his speech before a conference titled “Women in Uniform” at the ADFA and his opinion does not appear ‘off-the-cuff’.

Australia’s mainstream print media routinely labels female ADF personnel as ‘trailblazers’ when they report milestones in Australia’s military institution that concern the integration of women into armed support roles and leadership roles in the officer ranks (e.g. The Australian 1974: 2–3; Courier Mail 1998b; Chandler 2006). For example, in 2006, Australia’s largest selling newspaper, the Sydney Morning Herald, labels RAAF transport pilot Linda Corbund a ‘trailblazer’. This statement occurs in a feature article that reports Corbund’s promotion to the mid-career officer rank of Wing Commander in the RAAF. This article mentions how Corbund informs the staff journalist she does not
consider herself a “trailblazer”. In direct response to Corbund’s statement, the staff journalist explicitly challenges this RAAF Officer and states “but as the first female commanding officer of a flying squadron, she is (Sydney Morning Herald 2006: 1).” This media article portrays the promotion of a female to a mid-ranking RAAF officer position as an abnormal occurrence that defies the barriers male ADF personnel place before women in this institution. This portrayal of women as almost invisible in such roles upholds hegemonic masculinity in the ADF’s leadership ranks as it replicates pre-existing perceptions in the public domain that the leadership ranks of Australia’s military institution is a domain of male exclusivity. Moreover, this journalist blatantly challenges Corbund’s statement she is not a ‘trailblazer’, and subordinates her opinion to the viewpoint of Australia’s patriarchal media.

*Subordination*

The subordination of women to men is a defining characteristic of the hierarchy of hegemonic masculinities that may prevail within a nation’s armed forces (Barrett 1996: 140) such as the ADF (Bridges 2005: 108). Male elites who defend the ADF’s GCP argue that it is inevitable intimate relations will occur between male and female combat personnel within frontline workspaces. Furthermore, they argue that these liaisons will interrupt the organisational dynamics of the combat ranks and this in turn will automatically erode the fighting capacities of Australia’s military institution to a degree that poses unacceptable risk to Australia’s national security. These policy discussions that centre on sexual relations focus exclusively on intimate acts committed voluntarily between male and female ADF personnel (e.g. Agostino 1998b: 61–62).
By posing these arguments in the public domain, supporters of the GCP reinforce the way women are subordinate to men in Australia’s armed forces. Those men who problematise women’s so-called ‘sexual presence’ defend the entrenched hegemonic masculinity of the ADF’s frontline workspaces in a nuanced manner as they imagine sexual relations as another domain of military service male personnel control (Agostino 1997: 26–27; Agostino 1998a: 8). These individuals argue that women’s presence on the frontline will distract male and female combatants from working efficiently because some combat personnel will on occasion focus their attention on their opposite sex partner while at work rather than centre their attention on their professional duties (e.g. Agostino 1998b: 61).

The problematisation of women’s sexual presence in the combat ranks was a popular theme reported to Clare Burton by male personnel who rejected the integration of women into frontline workspaces when she compiled her Report during the mid-1990s (e.g. Burton 1996: 88). For example, one unnamed male warrant officer serving in the Australian Army informed Burton that he is hostile to the idea that female personnel may be appointed into “warrior jobs” (Burton 1996: 47). This warrant officer believed that the creation of a female combat fighter would undermine the ability of combat personnel to protect their colleagues:

If you have a man and a woman together [my emphasis] over a period of time, it may cause some fraternisation, or getting into a sexual encounter which will compromise the security of others [my emphasis] (Male Warrant Officer quoted in Burton 1996: 47).

By their nature, consensual intimate relations between men and women imply both participants share equal power relations. Those men who problematise the likelihood that intimate relations will occur between male and female combat personnel silently reject
the notion that women may engage on equal terms with men in the ADF. Moreover, these men communicate a nuanced message that men control the socialisation of women’s bodies, especially in the military institution, and that they will continue to reject the integration of women into the combat ranks because this resistance is to their advantage (e.g. Agostino 2003: 114–115).

Male repression of the socialised female gendered body is a defining character trait of a patriarchal (e.g. military) society (Brown 1992). Moreover, supporters of the GCP who focus on the ‘problem’ of fraternisation between male and female combat personnel support the argument put forward by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 851–852) that hegemonic masculinity is fundamentally embodied. Men whose bodies enjoy an elite status normally dominate and suppress subordinated inferior bodies as a means to replicate the elite status the hegemonic masculinity bestows on their group in the armed forces and the civilian domain.

The manner in which these policy discussions focus almost exclusively on the challenges caused by male–female fraternisation supports the conceptual argument in the masculinities literature that heterosexuality is normally a pre-requisite for membership of a group that enjoys elite masculine status (Connell 1998b: 4; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 851). This particularly concerns admission into an elite masculinity within the hierarchy of multiple hegemonic masculinities that exists in the armed forces of western nations such as the US Armed Forces (Barrett 1996: 133) and the ADF (Buttsworth 2003: 37). Same-sex romantic and physical encounters are a fact of Australia’s military history (e.g. Canaday 1992: 1–7). It is exceptionally rare for defenders of the GCP to acknowledge that intimate relations between same-sex personnel occur in combat and
non-combat classified units. By ignoring this reality, these men imagine homosexual personnel as subordinate to all heterosexual personnel. Some scholars argue that homosexual masculinities are absent from the ADF’s internally recognised hierarchy of masculinities because some heterosexual men who belong to dominant masculinities regard male homosexual personnel as feminine while others refuse to acknowledge that male homosexual personnel have ever served in Australia’s military institution (e.g. Agostino 2003: 115–116).

Prior to 1992, defenders of the GCP were more likely to use language that explicitly subordinates homosexual masculinities to the elevated masculine statuses enjoyed by the ADF’s heterosexual male personnel in combat and non-combat classified roles. The ADF overturned its ban against homosexual personnel serving in Australia’s armed forces in 1992. This policy change was actioned so that Australia could comply with UN treaties it had ratified that outlaw discrimination in the work sector based on group differences, such as Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 111 (1958) (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1992: 4–5). Two principal reasons explain why public criticism targeted towards Australia’s homosexual personnel ceases during the early 1990s. The first explanation is that the Armed Forces Federation (Australia) and the Australian Defence Association instructed its members, who included serving and retired Defence personnel, to not comment publicly about issues related to homosexual military personnel. These agencies issued these directives shortly after the ADF annulled its policy that prohibited homosexual persons from serving in Australia’s armed forces. The second reason is that serving military personnel who openly criticise their colleagues’ sexual orientation might breach Defence Equity and Diversity Regulations that outlaw discrimination based on sexuality (Smith 1995: 544–545).
President of the Victorian RSL Bruce Ruxton (1990: NP) is an example of a male elite who publicly defends the GCP in a manner that subordinates Australia’s female Defence personnel to the hierarchy of elite masculinities that exists in Australia’s military institution. Moreover, he simultaneously portrays homosexual masculinities as absent from the hierarchy of masculinities that existed in Australia’s armed forces. This is evident when he claims that no homosexual personnel served in the Australian Army on the frontline during the Second World War. Ruxton (1990: NP) argues that female combatants in “foxholes” will distract men from the task of fighting the enemy and poses this argument as a reason why the state must continue to enforce Australia’s GCP:

Could you imagine Bruce Ruxton and a good-looking [female] infanteer [my emphasis] in the same foxhole together? In my period-of-time the gay situation didn’t exist [my emphasis]. When men were there, with life or death at stake, there was no role there for a female [my emphasis], I’m sorry (Ruxton, President Victorian RSL in ABC 1990: NP).

Ruxton and other likeminded supporters of the GCP deny the reality that homosexual relations among ADF personnel have long occurred in Australia’s military institution (e.g. Ford 1996), even on the frontline (Agostino 1998b: 63). By doing so, Ruxton and other elites seek to preserve the way that the elevated masculine prestige bestowed on Australia’s all-male combat fighters is restricted to heterosexual men (e.g. Buttsworth 2003: 237). Ruxton’s defence of the GCP occurs on ABC Talkback Radio on 31 May 1990, shortly after the ADF announced publicly that it had authorised the appointment of female personnel into combat-related roles in its Naval Corps (e.g. ADF 1999: NP). Ruxton’s statement above shows how the thematic content in the evidence I explore is sometimes limited to a fixed period.

Bruce Ruxton is an example of a public figure who has blatantly expressed vitriolic attitudes towards those who support the reversal of the ADF’s GCP. This toxicity was
evident in 2000 when he defended the GCP against the backdrop of the public release of The Campbell Report. Ruxton (in Williams, N 2000: NP) defended the GCP in Australia’s mainstream print media. He belittles women who support the reversal of the ADF’s GCP by labelling them “hairy-legged feminist types” (Ruxton in Williams, N 2000: NP). This verbal attack against feminists is an example of the way that defenders of hegemonic masculine power structures often engage in behaviour that Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 840) term “toxic” [social] practices”. For example, they make statements in the public domain that denigrate homosexual persons and defend the culture of misogyny that prevails in the ADF, especially among this institution’s all-male combat personnel (e.g. Agostino 1998b: 69).

**Challenging feminists**

Defenders of the GCP challenge feminists and other supporters of gender equality who advocate the abolition of this regime. This behaviour seeks to replicate the hegemonic masculinity in the ADF. The evidence I present in this section of my discussion supports a popular conceptual argument that exists in the masculinities literature. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 844, 848) theorise that male elites replicate the *status quo* of hegemonic masculinity by discrediting those who advocate alternatives to this form of male privilege.

The evidence I explore in this section shows how the rights versus readiness divide persists in policy debates during the period of this study. Those who attack feminists focus on the need to defend Australia’s civil–military gender gap for unspecified operational reasons. These policy discussions rarely mention issues that concern the
biophysical performance of the gendered combat body. Supporters of the GCP repeatedly cite operational effectiveness factors as a “catch-all term” (Davison 2007: 66) to argue that the state must exclude women from combat service. In many cases, those who cite this term to defend this regime do not define specific operational problems that automatically occur when the military integrates female personnel into combat roles.

In contrast to the personal opinions put forward by male military elites, the ADF’s GCP documents do not use hostile language to attack feminists. These Reports merely note the existence of the rights versus readiness divisive debate within public discourses. The RODC Report Part A fleetingly acknowledges this policy debate deep in this document under a header titled in upper case “WOMEN’S RIGHTS LEGISLATION” (Australian Army 1978a: 25). In contrast to the ADF’s GCP documents published in the 1970s, The Quinn and Toulson Report makes more prominent its discussion of gender equality issues (Quinn and Toulson 1987: 10). This historical marker demonstrates further how the GCP documents react to major gender equality developments that transpire in Australia’s civilian society. An example of this includes the enactment of Australia’s Federal Sex Discrimination Act in 1984, which occurs three years prior to the publication of The Quinn and Toulson Report. This Report first discusses the issue of gender equality in the third paragraph of its Executive Summary. This section of The Quinn and Toulson Report mentions that it needs to address the rights versus readiness divisive debate. In the opening sentence of this paragraph, Quinn and Toulson (1987: iv) state: “arguments for women to perform combat roles centre around [my emphasis] issues of equal rights and the responsibilities of full citizenship [my emphasis].”
The Ferguson Report also acknowledges that the rights versus readiness debate exists and likewise elevates the prominence of this topic in its policy discussion. Dunn (1998: 2) first mentions the existence of this divisive debate in his Methodological Approach section on page 2. This Report informs its audience that the ADF’s review of the GCP:

has not been approached as a gender issue [my emphasis], but as an equity issue based on employment competency [my emphasis] underpinned by the requirement to maintain the ADF [sic] [ADF’s] combat capability [my emphasis] (Major General [Australian Army] P.J. Dunn 1998: 2).

The state and ADF combat officers, both serving and retired, persistently defend the GCP by challenging feminists and others who publicly support the reversal of this regime. Male elites with military service experience overwhelmingly dominate policy discussions that reject the imperative of pursuing gender equality in the ADF’s combat ranks. The language Australia’s Prime Minister John Howard uses to justify enforcing the GCP is evidence he rejects the argument that the ADF must implement gender-neutral employment policies as a matter of urgency. His contextual use of the word “imposed” explicitly communicates his belief that Defence policies that maximise Australia’s military capability take precedence over organisational changes that advance the integration of women in Australia’s armed forces:

I don’t think it’s [reversing the ADF’s GCP] something that should be imposed on the military according to some doctrine of gender equality [my emphasis]. I don’t think that [gender equality] is the issue, the issue is operational judgements [my emphasis] (Howard in ABC 2002: NP).

Howard’s defence of the GCP in this passage I cite above suggests it is imperative that the state preserves Australia’s civil–military gender gap. His reference to “operational judgements” argues that military capability remains the prime concern for Defence policy makers but he does not define what he means by the term ‘operational
judgements’. Furthermore, he also does now explain how or why the ADF’s ‘operational effectiveness’ will automatically erode if the state reverses the GCP. Howard (in ABC 2002: NP) makes this comment on the current affairs ABC Radio program ‘PM’. Howard was a member of a panel of discussants that included senior ADF personnel. This program assembled these persons to debate the merits of preserving the ADF’s GCP. Howard did not make these comments ‘off-the-cuff’ and his statement reflects his considered opinion. I argue that the choices of words Howard and other senior Federal Government Ministers have used to defend the GCP are constrained by the office they hold, because they do not wish to alienate people in the electorate who support gender equality. Howard (in ABC 2002: NP) asserts that he will not reverse the GCP to appease those who advocate the realisation of gender equality in the ADF if this policy change will automatically undermine the ADF’s combat effectiveness to an unacceptable degree.

In contrast to Prime Minister Howard’s statement, cited above, the evidence I explore below illustrates how male elites with combat service invariably use language that is more aggressive when they challenge feminists and others who reject the GCP. Moreover, this representative collection of evidence illustrates the conceptual argument in the masculinities literature that argues male elites actively reproduce hegemonic masculine structures (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 844) such as those that prevail in Australia’s armed forces (e.g. Agostino 1997: 58). Male elites who benefit most from the patriarchal dividends these particular hegemonic masculine structures bestow on men persistently attack feminists in the public domain. Notable elites include male journalists – especially those who work for the print media, Church leaders and combat officers with current and prior service in the Australian Army.
Statements I cite below by Greville (1988: 16) and Reynolds (1989: 8) respond to the announcements made by the Hawke Labor Government during the late 1980s supporting in principle the gradual integration of women into armed combat-support fighting roles. This chance in policy stance was a response to the ADF’s ongoing inability to recruit and retain sufficient personnel (e.g. ADF 1993: Annexe A, p. 3). Australian Army Executive Brigadier P.J. Greville’s (1988: 16) defence of the GCP explicitly appeals to the rights versus readiness divisive debate in a journal article that appears in the *Pacific Defence Reporter*. He blatantly trivialises the pursuit of gender equality in the Armed Forces by labelling feminist causes as inconsequential (i.e. his reference to “frivolous”) and irrational (i.e. his reference to “mystic”). Pell (2009) responds to a statement issued by Australia’s Minister or Defence Science and Personnel, Greg Combet, which informs the public that his Government plans to annul the ADF’s GCP by implementing gender-neutral combat entry standards (e.g. Combet in Kerr 2009).

The [Australian armed] *services are small* [my emphasis] by any standards, and pitifully so when one considers the requirements for relatively low level conflict. Their combat strength must not be diluted [with women combatants] for *frivolous reasons* [my emphasis], such as satisfying some *mystic feminist goal* [my emphasis] (Brigadier P. J. Greville, Australian Army, 1988: 16).

We are not going to let women fight our wars. The age of chivalry is not dead, even if we are in the age of *feminism* [my emphasis] (Australian Army Spokesman Captain Reynolds in Dropulich 1989: 8).

But do we really want to expose those who are the source of life and love in human communities to the horrors of the battlefield, just so *feminists* [my emphasis] can tick another item off their equality agenda (Cardinal George Pell, Leader Sydney Diocese of the Catholic Church, in Sydney Morning Herald 2009).

Sheridan’s description of feminists as not “normal” implies that most Australians do not support those feminists who advocate the reversal of the GCP. This is a curious
argument, as feminists who speak publicly and contribute to discourses about women’s military participation are normally associated with academic institutions and not mainstream society (e.g. Thornton 1990: 139–140; Agostino 2000). Sheridan’s general hostility towards all feminists suggests that he rejects the core principles the organised women’s movement pursue, such as the realisation of gender equality.

Sheridan’s subtle reference to majority support illustrates a theoretical principle Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 846) term “cultural consent”. Male elites and other men may defend the benefits that hegemonic masculinities bestow on male elites and other men who benefit from the patriarchal dividend by arguing that popular support exists in the community for preserving the status quo of gender relations.

**Cultural consent**

Male elites from Australia’s Executive and the ADF who support the GCP often argue that cultural consent in favour of enforcing this policy exists in the civilian societies and military institutions in Australia and other western nations. The nuanced messages these references to cultural consent convey is that the democratically elected state should create policies that respect the views of the majority of its populace. My review of this evidence reaffirms the conceptual argument which states that male elites actively defend hegemonic masculinity and the ways that this structure interplays at the “local”, “regional” and “global” levels as a means to replicate male privilege in the global patriarchal order-of-power (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 829). The armed forces are a powerful cultural and political institution in Australia (e.g. Pettman 1996: 16–17) and globally and this explains why those who support patriarchy show a strong interest
in preserving frontline fighting roles as a domain of male exclusivity (Connell 2001b: 39).

The evidence I explore in this section shows how those who argue that cultural consent in favour of the GCP exists have rarely cited survey data to support their viewpoint. Moreover, some men have claimed survey data exists which confirms cultural consent in favour of the GCP exists, but they have not cited any specific details of the poll. Furthermore, some people quote out of date data or they cite evidence selectively and ignore data that contradicts their position. I argue that these flawed approaches to debate provide further evidence that supporters of the GCP seek to preserve this regime at least in part because they seek to preserve the status quo of gender relations. Ashcraft (2005: 69) distinguishes between “overt consent” and “apparent consent” (Ashcraft 2005: 83). I argue that reference to opinion polls is an explicit reference to overt support within Australia’s civilian community and military institution in support of the GCP. References to quantitative data avoid relying on apparent consent as this contains less weight than objective research that uses statistics to capture support levels using widely accepted data inference principles from mathematical sciences.

The ADF commissioned The Hodson and Salter Report in 1993 and this document was published by the Australian Army in 1995 (Hodson and Salter 1995). Captains (Australian Army) S.E. Hodson and J.S. Salter (1993) collected their data in 1993 and this survey measures support among male and female personnel in the Australian Army for the integration of women into combat and combat-related duties in the Australian Army (Hodson and Salter 1995). Collecting this data was necessary because by 1993 the ADF had appointed women into occupations in the ADF’s Air Corps and Naval Corps.
into roles whose primary purpose was to deploy weapons against the enemy during war, such as Combat Weapons Systems operators in the RAN. Prior to 1993, women had not been appointed to any role in the Australian Army whose primary purpose is to maim and kill the enemy during warfare on the frontline, although the ADF admitted women into some roles designated as combat-support such as catering and intelligence (ADF 1993: Annex A pp. 3–4; ADF 1999: NP). Women were not appointed to these occupations in the Australian Army, as combat-support personnel in this service are more likely to engage the enemy face-to-face. This reality explains why the distinction between combat-related and Direct Combat roles in this service is less clear (e.g. Dunn 1998: 13). The ADF could monitor the way male personnel reacted to the integration of women into armed combat-support roles that occurred in the RAN and RAAF from 1990 to 1993. The Australian Army had not integrated women into Combat-related roles since 1984, which is the year that Australia’s Defence Executive created this designation and restricted women’s right to work in these occupations.

The Hodson and Salter Report is the most cited ADF survey that captures support levels among ADF personnel for the GCP. This survey concludes that only 15% of male personnel and 29% of female personnel held positive attitudes towards the integration of women into combat roles in the Australian Army. Moreover, The Hodson and Salter Report states that 29% of female respondents and 15% of male respondents chose the “undecided” option to reply to the question that asked them whether they believed women should have the right to serve in combat roles in the Australian Army (Hodson and Salter 1995: 6).
It is questionable whether statistics published in The Hodson and Salter Report reflect contemporary support levels among ADF personnel in favour of enforcing the GCP and I offer four reasons to support this argument. First, as Hodson and Salter conducted their survey during the early 1990s it is probable this data is now out of date and does not reflect the opinions of currently serving Defence personnel. The second reason relates to the small sample size. This survey captures the opinions of less than 1% of serving personnel in the Australian Army. Hodson and Salter polled only 100 females and 99 males. The third reason is that this survey does not capture historical support levels among RAN and RAAF personnel in favour of preserving and overturing the GCP. This poll data is therefore not representative of personnel attitudes toward this regime across the ADF’s tri-services. The fourth reason is that this survey does not measure support for reversing the GCP in the RAN or RAAF and so it does not capture support for enforcing and overturning the ADF’s service-wide GCP (Hodson and Salter 1995).

Male ADF combat officers repeatedly cite poll data such as The Hodson and Salter Report more than a decade after the Australian Army conducted this survey. Moreover, these discussions do not acknowledge the limitations concerning datedness and the lack of representativeness I identify in my discussion above. For example, in 2007 Major Scott Davison cites the Hodson and Salter Report and argues that this document provides partial evidence that cultural consent in favour of the GCP exists among male ADF combat personnel. Davison refers to a narrow form of cultural consent as he explores whether majority support presently exists among currently serving combat officers in the Australian Army. This reference to cultural consent within the ADF is dubious. The Hodson and Salter Report only captures the opinions of men who work as combat
officers and these men have a vested interested in preserving their privileged status in
Australia’s armed forces. Davison argues:

By far the biggest obstacle [my emphasis] in the fight to open combat roles to women remains the
entrenched [hostile] attitudes of many of the ADF’s combat soldiers [my emphasis]. Surveys
canvassing the military combat-related employment of women conclude that the most negative
attitudes can be attributed to male soldiers and officers serving in front-line units [my emphasis]
(Major Scott Davison, Australian Army Armour Corps 2007: 72).

In the passage I cite above, Davison (2007: 72) utilises strong language in using the
words “By far the biggest obstacle” to argue that the single most dominant factor that
justifies enforcing the GCP is the hostile attitudes among ADF combat personnel,
especially in the Australian Army. Davison’s use of strong language and his discussion
of a dubious form of cultural consent is representative of the nuanced way that other
male ADF personnel publicly support the culture of male privilege that exists in the
ADF’s combat corps. My review of independent testimonies provided by senior,
experienced Defence personnel reaffirms my argument that it is doubtful whether
popular support in favour of the GCP has ever existed among the majority of Defence
personnel from the officer ranks and the non-officer ranks in Australia’s armed forces.

Public testimonies provided by male and female ADF personnel deny that cultural
consent in favour of enforcing the GCP has ever existed among the majority of male
ADF personnel since Australia’s armed forces closed its Auxiliary women’s corps in the
1970s and 1980s and integrated women into the (formerly all-male) Regular Corps. This
evidence includes public statements made by senior male and female ADF personnel
such as Commander (RAN) June Baker and Lieutenant Commander (RAN) Peter Jones.
Both these naval officers argue that empirical evidence shows how the integration of
women into the ADF’s officer ranks and armed support roles gradually increases
acceptance levels among male ADF personnel in favour of women engaging in roles previously restricted to male personnel, especially among the ADF’s younger generation. As the ADF appoints more women into armed combat-support roles, more male ADF personnel accept the idea that women can succeed in these roles if they engage the enemy during wartime. These testimonies provided by ADF personnel deny that cultural consent in favour of the GCP exists in the ADF first appear on the public record during the 1980s and become more prominent during the 1990s (e.g. Baker, quoted in Kean 1985: 44, 46; Jones 1993: 26). The dates of this evidence causes me to question why male ADF personnel such as Major Scott Davison continue to cite flawed poll data to argue that cultural consent in favour of the GCP exists in the ADF around the time he authors his journal article, *circa* 2007 (e.g. Davison 2007: 78).

**Local consent**

The ADF’s GCP documents and elites argue that cultural consent exists in favour of enforcing Australia’s GCP exists in what Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 829) term the “local” level. These Reports claim that majority support exists within Australia’s civilian society and military institution in favour of excluding women from combat service and that this factor offers strong justification for enforcing the policy *status quo*. The RODC Report Part A is representative of the way Australia’s Defence Executive has historically assumed that local cultural consent exists, even though it explicitly states that no survey has ever quantified whether the majority of Australia’s citizens support the GCP:

>Whilst the attitudes of the Australian society to women in combat have not been researched [my emphasis] there is unlikely [my emphasis] to be a strong and wide-spread [sic] public demand for
women to be employed in the *classic combat roles of the army* [my emphasis] (Australian Army 1978a: 11).

This approach to public debate that argues local cultural consent exist, only appears in the GCP documents published prior to 1998. The Ferguson Report explicitly rejects the weight the ‘community support’ factor exerts over the enforcement of Australia’s GCP. This Report argues that community support levels are unknown, noting it “has not been tested for some time” (Dunn 1998: 5). Dunn (1998: 5) does not cite specific details concerning any historical survey, so it is not clear if he refers to the Frank Small & Associates survey dated 1995, cited in Chapter One. The Ferguson Report states that cultural consent in favour of enforcing the GCP might have existed in the past but does not refer to specific survey data to support this claim:

> The community’s attitudes to women being employed in combat roles has not been tested for some time [my emphasis], and it is the Review Team’s opinion [my emphasis] that community attitudes may vary between generations (Dunn 1998: 5).

The views expressed by the RSL [arguing majority support exists for the GCP] have not been tested, and public attitude on this issue is largely unknown as no recent surveys canvassing the issue have been undertaken [my emphasis] (Dunn 1998: 15).

The Campbell Report and The Holden and Tanner Report do not argue that cultural consent in favour of enforcing the GCP exists in the civilian community. However, Federal parliamentarians and male ADF personnel continue to justify the need to enforce the ADF’s GCP by arguing majority community support exists. These discussions occur before and after Frank Small & Associates conducted their survey in 1995. The character of these references to “community support” is likewise suggestive of a viewpoint that seeks to defend hegemonic masculinity in the ADF’s frontline units. These supporters of the GCP never cite data to defend their claim that majority support for this regime exists in Australia’s civilian society. The representative selection of data I cite in the next few
paragraphs below illustrates how these individuals refer to majority community support by claiming that cultural consent exists in favour of enforcing the GCP. These references to community support persist during the period of this study.

Defence records on file at the National Archives of Australia show how references to community support contain internal contradictions within official policy documents and communiqués authored by senior personnel from different Defence Branches during a narrow period. This observation supports my claim that references to cultural consent are dubious because statistical surveys do not accurately capture public support at any time in Australia’s history. For example, a Department of Defence Memorandum titled “Women in the Australian Services” dated 24 April 1974 refers to “accepted national attitudes” to explain why Australia enforces a GCP. The objective of this document establishes whether Australia’s treatment of its female military personnel complies with the obligations stipulated in United Nations human rights treaties Australia has ratified, such as the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (1958) I refer to earlier. In this Memorandum, the Department of Defence justifies the status of the GCP by arguing that cultural consent exists within Australia’s civilian society and that this explains why Australia’s armed forces do not train women to undertake combat and combat-support duties:

The Women’s [armed] Services are auxiliary forces [my emphasis] to enable the release of men for employment on operational tasks [my emphasis]. In accordance with accepted national attitudes women are not trained for combat duty [my emphasis] (Department of Defence, Policy Memorandum, 1974: NP).

The Memorandum I cite immediately above partly contradicts a statement authored by the Department of Defence, Science and Defence Branch dated two months later when
this Branch responds to a complaint raised by civilian citizen ‘Ms Freeman’ (Freeman 1974). Ms Freeman argues that the ADF’s GCP unfairly discriminated against Australia’s women. In their response to Ms Freeman, this Branch defends the GCP and argues that Australia’s armed forces do not require female combatants because Australia maintains an all-volunteer force and can recruit sufficient male volunteers to defend Australia. This Branch states that Australia enjoys a “low threat assessment” in 1974 (Department of Defence, Science and Defence Branch 1974: 2). In the concluding section of this letter, this Branch acknowledges that contemporary support levels in favour of enforcing Australia’s GCP are unknown. This is clear when this letter states “perhaps a survey of community attitudes to the wider employment of female personnel in the Armed Services” might be appropriate to gauge whether the GCP has popular support in order to gauge whether cultural consent exists (Department of Defence, Science and Defence Branch 1974: 2).

**Female interest**

Supporters of the GCP likewise refer to female interest levels within the ADF and Australia’s civilian society to justify the enforcement of this regime. This reference to female interest levels appeals to the notion of local cultural consent, which relates to support levels among women in Australia’s civilian populace and military institution. This evidence strengthens my argument that defenders of the GCP have actively sought to preserve and replicate hegemonic masculinity in the ADF’s combat corps. Prior to 1996, the ADF collected quantitative personnel survey data to capture female support levels for and against enforcing Australia’s GCP. This activity occurred on a regular basis (e.g. Australian Army 1978b: Chapter 6–15; Quinn 1988: 64–65; Little 1991a;
This ADF survey data consistently reports that a minority of serving female ADF personnel express an *outright* interest in joining the ADF’s combat service. For example, The Campbell Report claims that data collected from Quinn (1989), Little (Little 1991a; 1991b) and Hodson and Salter (Hodson and Salter 1995) consistently report that female “interest levels” in performing combat service are “relatively low” among currently serving ADF personnel (Campbell 2000: 3).

My independent review of Quinn’s survey data leads me to conclude that female interest levels among ADF personnel in favour of preserving and overturning the GCP were approximately equal during the mid-late 1980s. The text I cite immediately below summarises female support levels for the GCP from the data collected by Defence Psychologist Major (Australian Army) Kathryn Quinn (1989: 45):

[Survey question]
Would you be willing to serve in combat positions if you were properly trained?

[Survey response data]
Definitely YES 26%  on balances YES 19%  don’t know 17%  on balance NO 13%  definitely NO 25%

I argue that Campbell (2000: 3) is selective with her data analysis. From my independent review of Quinn’s Report, I conclude that a minority of female respondents in fact indicate a “NO” answer (38%), compared to 45% who offer a “YES” response. Moreover, Quinn (1989: 7) collected her data in 1987, 13 years prior to the publication of The Campbell Report. This dubious interpretation of Quinn’s poll data in The Campbell Report is representative of the ways male defence elites and the ADF’s GCP documents falsely argue that cultural consent exists among ADF female personnel and
claim historical survey data support their assertion. These references to ‘hard’ data aim to legitimise the enforcement of the GCP by portraying it as a policy that has majority support. I argue that these various referrals to cultural consent are evidence defenders of the GCP seek to preserve hegemonic masculinity in the ADF’s combat ranks because they persistently exaggerate the degree of support that exists among serving ADF personnel.

In a similar vein to Campbell (2000: 3), Michael O’Connor defends the GCP by arguing that cultural consent in favour of this regime exists among women in Australia’s civilian society around 2001. O’Connor (in ABC 2001: 3) speculates that the majority of women in Australia’s civilian society are disinterested in joining the ADF’s combat ranks and cites women’s participation rates in the ADF from circa 1991 to 2001 to support his argument. O’Connor informs his audience that female participation rates grew negligibly during this decade, despite the ADF opening thousands of headcount positions in combat-related occupations during this period:

> It [long-term female ADF participation levels] suggests that the pool of [Australian] women interested [my emphasis] in the defence force as a place for a job, is really not very large, at all. I suspect [my emphasis] that if you include combat, where women can actually be directed into combat jobs [my emphasis], whether they like it or not, the pool may even diminish [my emphasis] (Michael O’Connor Executive Director, Australian Defence Association, in ABC 2001: 3).

O’Connor makes this statement on ABC Radio shortly after the public release of The Campbell Report. The logic underpinning O’Connor’s argument that cultural consent in favour of the GCP exists among Australia’s female civilian population is flawed. Measuring the number of women who wish to serve as combat personnel in the ADF does not automatically equate to female support levels in favour of reversing or upholding the GCP (e.g. Carter 1996: 104). Thousands or millions of Australian women
may personally support the reversal of the GCP even though they have no intention of working as a combat fighter or joining the ADF to work in any other role. The Burton Report supports this argument because it shows how the persistence of the GCP is a factor that reduces recruitment and retention levels of female ADF personnel in non-combat employment categories. Many Australian women regard the GCP as evidence that women cannot succeed in this organisation, as they are not welcome to serve in this service’s core operational areas (Burton 1996: ES32, 101).

O’Connor’s use of the word “suspect” (above) is evidence he is not aware whether historical or current data exists that quantifies how many women wish to join the ADF and how these figures compare to male interest levels. His reference to cultural consent is representative of how other male elites who defend the GCP persistently argue that majority support exists among the female civilian population, but do not cite survey data to support their position. I argue that male elites who make these dubious claims about female culture consent seek to replicate hegemonic masculinity in the ADF’s combat services. The masculinities literature shows how male elites who support social structures that uphold high male privilege may argue that cultural consent prevails locally, regionally and globally as a means to the gendered order-of-power (e.g. Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 847–848).

**Global cultural consent**

Supporters of the ADF’s GCP argue that global cultural consent in favour of enforcing this regime in the military institution exists. The ADF’s GCP documents cite cross-national survey data that measure personnel support in other nations’ armed forces in
favour of enforcing a GCP in their own military institution. These Reports justify enforcing Australia’s GCP partially on this basis. For example, The Campbell Report states that only 31% of female Canadian female military personnel were interested in serving in combat roles in Canada’s Armed Forces (Truscott 1997: NP cited in Campbell 2000: 3–4). This discussion occurs under the title “Interest Levels”, where this Report discusses and quantifies support levels among ADF personnel in favour of admitting women into combat (Campbell 2000: 3).

In a similar vein to The Campbell Report, Quinn and Toulson (1987: iv) suggest that global cultural consent in favour of enforcing a GCP exists. It does this mentioning that all TTCP member nations’ armed forces exclude women from multiple Defence work categories, especially those whose primary purpose is to engage the enemy face-to-face on the frontline during wartime. This document makes prominent this statement by placing it in their Executive Summary section. In the concluding section of The Quinn and Toulson Report, this document provides specific details about support levels in other militaries. This Report informs its audience that support for the reversal of Canada’s GCP was lowest among senior ranking male personnel. Quinn and Toulson (1987: 13) do not cite details of any survey to support their argument. Readers of this Report cannot gauge basic details such as the date of the survey. Quinn and Toulson (1987: 13) insert the word “fell” before the passage of text that refers to specific support levels among those who most vigorously reject the appointment of female combatants into Canada’s Land Army Corps. Their use of the word “fell” purposefully emphasises the strong cultural consent that exists in favour of the GCP among Canadian Forces’ most senior Non Commissioned Officers:
The Canadian Forces conducted attitude surveys to assess the level of acceptance by men and women in combat units... At Chief Warrant Officer Level, the percentages [of support for integrating women] fell [my emphasis] to; Artillery 7 percent, Armour 23 percent, and Infantry 33 percent (Quinn and Toulson 1987: 13).

Defenders of the ADF’s GCP also argue that regional cultural consent exists in favour of enforcing a GCP in the military institution. Male elites mention how the exclusion of women from combat service is the cultural norm in virtually all western nations, especially in the national Armed Forces of TTCP member nations. These individuals argue that this pattern is evidence cultural consent exists among the majority populace of other western countries that possess similar legal and political structures and cultural heritages to Australia. The character of these discussions changes over time. As women integrate into combat roles in other western nations’ military forces such as Denmark (Dunn 1998: 16), references to this form of regional cultural consent became noticeably less frequent as hegemonic masculinities that exists in other western nations’ armed forces gradually erodes.

Prior to 1989, supporters of the ADF’s GCP mention how all TTCP member nations exclude women from combat service, as Canada did not overturn its GCP until 1989. For example, Quinn and Toulson (1987: iv) state that all TTCP member nations exclude women from combat service. This Report elevates the prominence of its cross-national policy comparison and positions this argument on the first page of its Executive Summary:

The participation of women in combat is relatively rare [my emphasis] ... At the present time none of the TTCP nations [Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand, United States] employ women in combat formations (Quinn and Toulson 1987: iv).

After 1989, supporters of Australia’s GCP who claim that global cultural consent exists mention how most western nations exclude women from working in at least some
combat categories. This altered reference to global cultural consent is popular among Australia’s senior Federal Government Ministers (e.g. Faulkner 1993), as Federal Government Ministers often justify domestic policy with reference to international norms that prevail in western countries:

Canada was the first NATO country [of 19 members] to open all occupations to women, although [a minority of] others (Norway, Denmark and Belgium) have since followed (Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Committee, 2000: NP).

Only a few nations [my emphasis] allow women in combat in some [my emphasis] combat roles: USA, Canada, Holland, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Germany and Israel (Department of Veterans’ Affairs 2006: 99).

Male elites also claim that global cultural consent in favour of enforcing a GCP exists by arguing that most Defence personnel who serve in western nations’ military institutions support the mandatory of exclusion of women from some or all combat roles. This reference to cross-national cultural consent within the military institution is evident when Australian Army Combat Engineer Captain M.S. Barry (1993: 17–19) defends the state’s enforcement of Australia’s GCP. Barry (1993: 18) poses this viewpoint in a scholarly article he published in the *Australian Defence Force Journal* shortly after the ADF integrated the first wave of female personnel into combat-related roles in Australia’s Air Corps and Naval Corps. Barry (1993: 18) cites a US Naval survey that reports that 84% of US military personnel believe US female military personnel serving in Southwest Asia “should be used for rear support roles only (Barry 1993: 18).” This survey captures the opinions of male and female US military personnel in the aftermath of US engagement in the Gulf War in 1991.

Barrie’s reference to the global domain of warfare is representative of the way other political and military elites support Australia’s GCP by highlighting the fact that male
military personnel dominate the management of large-scale violence in the global domain. This connection to the international arena of warfare offers partial evidence that male Defence elites support the GCP as they seek to preserve hegemonic masculinity within the global order-of-power. Militarism and the management of warfare in post-colonial states is a construct that displays traits of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2002: 141; 2009: 123). Furthermore, the realms of warfare and international security are patriarchal structures that uphold male dominance globally (Stiehm 1982). The underlying message persistently communicated in the public domain is that the management of large-scale violence, in the form of warfare, is the natural preserve of male elites and this reality justifies the state enforcing a GCP.

7.3 Hegemonic masculinity and state power

The ADF’s GCP is an exceptional policy and the exclusion of women from combat service in Australia’s armed forces is not just another example of discrimination against women that persists in this nation’s work sector or its broader society. The persistence of this regime is a dominant factor that replicates pre-existing cultural norms that imagine the management of large-scale violence as the exclusive domain of men in Australia’s military institution and civilian society. Australia’s public institutions that wield high power replicate this viewpoint, notably the military, the Federal Parliament and the Executive. These masculine entities support the patriarchal order-of-power that extends beyond Australia’s military institution and civilian society. As argued by Higate and Hopton (2005: 443):

The armed forces continue to represent the exemplar masculine institution in terms of their dominant values and gendered division of labour. These models of masculinity extend beyond the military [my emphasis] and tend to shape hegemonic ideologies [my emphasis] of what is to be a man throughout many aspects of life.
Australia’s armed forces are not just another public institution – they are a guarantor of state power. Australia’s patriarchal state fiercely has defended the defining characteristic of Australia’s civil–military gender gap, the GCP, because the combat service is where power is most concentrated in this formidable institution. As argued by (Connell 1987: 128–129) “the physical aggression of the frontline troops” creates a form of masculinity that is distinguishable from other military masculinities. The “military and [other] coercive apparatus” (Connell 1987: 128) such as policing institutions underpins state power; and the male dominated state purposefully controls these institutions to preserve the status quo of gender politics. The patriarchal character of the state and its armed forces intertwine primarily because the armed forces are the ultimate guarantor of state power:

If the reciprocal relationship between masculinity and militarism is being in some sense weakened, so too is the power of the state to manipulate public support for its right to use violence [my emphasis] to pursue its ideologies at home and abroad, and encourage young men to join the armed forces. Thus, the state has a vested interest in maintaining strong ideological links between militarism and masculinity (Higate and Hopton 2005: 435).

The masculinised image of the frontline military fighter is an expert manager of the most brutal forms of large-scale violence and the exclusion of women from combat upholds male supremacy in key institutions of state power. The executive is a male-dominated construct that maintains a strong interest in regulating the military’s combat units. This is because the state may consolidate its power and replicate the patriarchal society by engaging in extreme acts of violence and warfare within the nation and on the global stage (Sasson-Levy 2002: 377–379).
Management of violence

In its introduction section, The Ferguson Report brings the issue of the management of martial violence to the forefront of its policy analysis when it explores the criteria that officially define those frontline roles that remain closed to women. The unique role of the ADF as the manager of large-scale violence features prominently in this section of discussion. Moreover, this theme is central to the way this Report examines the definition of ‘Direct Combat’ and how the control of major acts of aggression such as warfare underpins the various rationales that justify enforcing the GCP. In his introduction section, Dunn (1998: 3) defines the term “Direct Combat” and informs his audience that the exclusion of women from engaging in violent encounters is central to this definition. Dunn (1998: 3) states that Australia’s servicewomen may not engage in military roles that might cause female personnel to be “exposed to a high probability of direct physical contact with an armed adversary.” His policy account of what military roles are classified as ‘Direct Combat’, which I cite in the sentence prior, is an almost verbatim definition of the GCP as defined on page 2 of ADF policy document DI-(G) PERS 32-1 (ADF 1994: 2). Dunn (1998: 3) again cites verbatim the definition of Direct Combat as it appears in DI-(G) PERS 32-1. This duplication of text reiterates the symbolic purpose of the ADF’s GCP. The intention and outcome of Australia’s GCP prevents Australia’s female military personnel from engaging in the most violent acts of war. This includes engaging in those frontline military roles where the primary role of the military combatant is to engage the enemy during warfare in a hand-to-hand duel to maim and kill the enemy face-to-face (e.g. Infantry) or to engage in armed fighting in immediate proximity to the frontline (e.g. Artillery). The official definition of ‘Direct
‘Combat’ defines the bounds of those roles closed to female personnel, and this includes, as defined by policy document DI-(G) PERS 32-1:

a. duties: requiring a person to participate directly in the commission of an act of violence [my emphasis] against the armed adversary, and

b. duties exposing a person to a high probability of direct physical contact with an armed adversary [my emphasis] (ADF 1994: 2).

This definition of ‘Direct Combat’ service cited above no longer reflects the reality of how the ADF deploys female personnel during warfare and military operations other than war. Since 1990, the ADF has deployed armed female combat-support personnel into multiple peacekeeping zones and armed military operations other than war (Department of Veterans’ Affairs 2006: 92–93, 96). The ADF’s current definition of Direct Combat is symbolic of the culture of male privilege that prevails throughout this institution, especially in its combat units. The ADF’s current definition of Direct Combat and its enforcement of a GCP presents a false public image which suggests that Australia’s military institution shields its female personnel from the risks and horrors of warfare and that its female personnel do not bear arms or fight the enemy face-to-face offshore. This myth in turn publicly replicates images and cultural norms that portray the management of national security as a domain of male-exclusive privilege (Spurling 2003).

The Ferguson Report acknowledges on multiple occasions that the restrictions on women’s military service that the ADF’s GCP aims to impose are not an accurate reflection of how Australia’s military institution has deployed its female personnel during the 1990s. For example, when exploring the ADF’s definition of Direct Combat, Major General P.J. Dunn concedes on two occasions that armed female ADF personnel already serve in risky occupations that expose them to high levels of violence:
Comment [original emphasis]. The inclusion of the definition at 9.b above, in the DI (G) PERS 32-1 would appear to be redundant [my emphasis]. In recent United Nations operations Australian servicewomen have been ‘exposed’ to a high probability of direct physical contact with an armed adversary (Dunn 1998: 3).

In the following sentence, after the quote I cite above from the Ferguson Report, Dunn states:

In addition, the [existing] employment of servicewomen in the Battalion Support Group of the Ready Deployment Force (RDF) places them [female Defence support personnel] in harms [sic][harm’s] way and therefore contravenes the intent of DI (G) PERS 32-1 as it presently reads (Dunn 1998: 3).

The two policy statements I cite above are firm evidence that the current definition of the ADF’s GCP is now redundant. Furthermore, the enforcement of this regime reflects the desire of the state and Australia’s Defence Executive to replicate the elite hierarchy of hegemonic masculinities that prevails in Australia’s armed forces. The Quinn and Toulson Report provides evidence that the ADF has been aware for a number of decades that its GCP imagines the management of violence as an elite masculine social construction that should be monopolised by men:

While Feld (1978) concedes that the campaign to get women into combat is logical for full citizenship rights, he does concede that the abolition of the masculine monopoly [my emphasis] for officially sanctioned violence [my emphasis] could conceivably have a radical impact on the conventional perceptions of both women and of violence [my emphasis] within the social system (Quinn and Toulson 1987: 6b).

The Quinn and Toulson Report make prominent its discussion of the themes masculine, monopoly and violence when it explores how these themes interconnect insofar as they explain the enforcement of the GCP in TTCP member nations. This policy document explores the theme of “masculine monopoly” as the first argument under the heading titled “The Case Against Women in Combat” (Quinn and Toulson 1987: 6b). The Quinn and Toulson Report does not advocate the need to reverse the elevated political and cultural prestige the ADF’s GCP bestows on Australia’s male combat military personnel.
This absence of discussion is representative of the various ways that the ADF’s GCP documents offer nuanced support for the hierarchy of elite masculinities that exists throughout the ADF’s combat services, its leadership ranks and its organisational culture in general.

The way that the ADF’s GCP documents routinely imagine the management of large-scale violence as the natural domain of men is significant from a gender relations perspective. The character of these discussions highlight the way that the patriarchal executive relies on its military force to preserve hegemonic masculinity in key institutions of state power, by resorting to violence on a large-scale if required (e.g. Connell 1987: 128–129). This conceptual argument illustrates how a GCP preserves hegemonic masculinity in Australia’s contribution to global warfare and international security, as combat is where the most extreme acts of violence take place (e.g. Wadham 2004: 4).

**Civil military relations**

In a similar vein to the ADF’s GCP documents, those individuals and institutions that dominate Australia’s civil–military relations persistently defend the need to uphold the management of large-scale violence as a domain of male privilege. Men without combat service also support the GCP as they benefit from hegemonic masculine structures that exist in the ADF. This conclusion reaffirms Barrett’s (1996: 140) research that confirms that male military personnel benefit from the hierarchy of multiple masculinities and hegemonic masculinities that exists within the military institution. This gendered social structure automatically subordinates all women to men, as martial femininities are absent from the hegemonic masculine structures that exist in the armed forces.
The persistence of the GCP preserves the hegemonic masculine character of Australia’s civil–military relations because women are invariably absent from key positions that may influence the formulation of Defence policy, such as the scope and definition of Australia’s GCP. Male elites and other men who imagine the management of large-scale violence as being the natural domain of men defend the hegemonic masculinity of Australia’s civil–military relations in the local domain. They also seek to replicate the way international relations exist as a hegemonic masculine structure as men dominate the composition of military forces and Defence Councils that manage international security at the regional level. They also seek to replicate hegemonic masculinity in the domain of international relations at the global level. For example, combat military personnel dominate the composition of peacekeeping forces that uphold peace, justice, order and good governance in weak or failed states (e.g. Stiehm 1982; Bridges and Horsfall 2009).

Greg Sheridan’s defence of the GCP is representative of the way other male elites who may influence Australia’s civil–military relations support this regime in the media by placing a strong emphasis on the theme of violence. Sheridan defends the GCP by portraying acts of low-level violence (e.g. “street” violence) (Sheridan 2009: NP) and the management of large-scale martial violence as anti-feminine social constructions:

> Our society is awash with violence [my emphasis]. Just walk through the centre of Melbourne about 1am any Saturday night if you don’t believe me. Much of that violence [my emphasis] is directed at women. To remove any notion that women are special [my emphasis], that men have an absolute obligation to protect women, it to coarsen and infantilise our society. It seems only five minutes ago that the feminist movement was telling us that women were superior because they were inherently less violent [my emphasis]. I’m inclined to agree with that proposition. Now it seems feminists are happy about violence [my emphasis] so long as women get an equal chance to do it [i.e. perform combat] (Greg Sheridan, Senior Foreign Editor in the Australian 2009: NP).

Sheridan’s defence of the GCP is a two-page article that appears in The Australian and he responds to the recent announcement made by Stephen Smith that informs the public that his government supports in principle the reversal of the ADF’s GCP. The passage I
cite above illustrates how the arguments put forward by supporters of the GCP to defend this regime are interrelated in most cases. For example, when Sheridan attacks feminists he seeks to replicate hegemonic masculinity. This behaviour is consistent with the way that Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 842, 844) argue that elites may discredit alternative social structures that threaten to undermine hegemonic masculinity. In the same passage of text, Sheridan portrays women as the nation’s beautiful souls. He draws on this gendered archetype to justify his argument that the management of large-scale violence must remain a domain of male privilege. I conclude that the majority of the documentary evidence I have explored communicates the same core message posed by Sheridan. Most policy discussions contain implicit and/or explicit references to themes that concern violence and the management of large-scale violence in particular. This finding is logical, as the armed forces are an institution that specialise in the management of large-scale violence such as warfare.

Sheridan’s discussion above does not occur spontaneously and his intervention in the public domain that centres on the management of large-scale violence is wilful and pursues a specific purpose. My review of the evidence shows that the majority of public statements do not occur ‘off-the-cuff’. Supporters of the GCP who defend this regime in this vein wilfully and persistently seek to replicate hegemonic masculinity that exists in the state apparatus. The executive relies on its ability to manage violence, and large-scale violence in particular to preserve the status quo of social relations and gender relations within the nation (Sasson-Levy 2002) and I argue that supporters of the GCP seek to preserve the status quo of the patriarchal state and the patriarchal society.
Sheridan (2009: NP) argues that Australia’s women are “special” and he urges his audience to resist social developments that will partially feminise the social construction of violence. Sheridan does not elaborate why he thinks women are ‘special’. This lack of explanation suggests he assumes that his readers agree the management of violence must remain an anti-feminine social construction and therefore the logic behind his argument requires no further elaboration. Sheridan’s discussion, which I cite above, uses the words ‘violence’ and ‘violent’ four times in one paragraph. His repetition of the theme of violence is representative of the way other male elites support the GCP by focusing on the argument that society must resist the partial feminisation of the management of violence, especially large-scale violence such as full-scale warfare.

The manner in which Major General Peter Phillips defends the GCP in Australia’s mainstream print media in 1999 is representative of the way other likeminded military elites publicly imagine the management of large-scale violence as a domain of male exclusivity. This officer held combat status and was a member of the ADF’s Executive Council at the time he vigorously defended the need to preserve the GCP in the Sunday Telegraph. Phillips’s defence of the GCP occurs in response to the ADF announcing the recommendation of The Ferguson Report to the media. He states that this review concludes that combat roles must remain permanently closed to women in the Australian Army’s Infantry Corps and Armour Corps because:

Wars are won by winning and holding ground, and that involves the deliberate destruction [my emphasis] of the enemy. A defence organisation that did not structure its [all-male combat] forces primarily to this end would be an international joke [my emphasis] (Major General Peter Phillips in Gora et al. 1999: NP).

Phillips’s use of the strong word destruction is a manifest statement that explicitly seeks to preserve the management of extreme acts of violence such as frontline warfare as a
male-exclusive privilege. His contextual reference to the ‘international’ domain likewise communicates a focused, purposeful message that seeks to replicate hegemonic masculinity that exists in the international arena. Phillips explicitly portrays the partial feminisation of international warfare as a “joke”, a social construction that cannot be taken seriously by senior military professionals and other likeminded persons.

The ADF’s GCP documents likewise reject the notion that a partially feminised combat service can successfully manage large-scale violence. The concluding section of The Ferguson Report is representative of this approach to public debate that rejects the legitimacy of partially feminising the management of extreme acts of violence such as large-scale warfare. This policy document is of major significance, as it is the most thorough review of Australia’s GCP. Furthermore, this is the only ADF GCP Report published after 1984 that provides a focused discussion of the ADF’s service-wide GCP and offers a dedicated discussion of each of the eight roles classified as Direct Combat (Dunn 1998).

The concluding section of The Ferguson Report explores the way combat personnel manage warfare in the global domain. Dunn (1998: 16) makes prominent this discussion as he places it under a header in upper case titled “OVERSEAS EXPERIENCES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN COMBAT TRADES”. His policy analysis in the Conclusions section of this Report spans eight paragraphs spread over two pages. These textual features are representative of how the ADF’s GCP documents provide in-depth cross-national policy comparisons to explore the dominant themes that centres on the management of violence to argue women are not suitable engage in military roles whose primary purpose is to engage the enemy face-to-face
during war. Dunn’s discussion in this section offers nuanced support for the replication of hegemonic masculinity in the arena of global warfare by imagining this domain as the exclusive and eternal preserve of all-male fighters.

The final passage of the concluding section of The Ferguson Report explores the outcomes that transpired in the Canadian Armed Forces (post 1989) and Danish Armed Forces (post 1998) after these military institutions reversed their GCP and admitted women into combat roles. Dunn (1998: 16–17) argues that the integration of women into these nation’s combat services has not been a success. Dunn (1998: 16–17) concludes that Canada’s female combat personnel have not demonstrated a strong interest in pursuing a long-term career in the Combat Corps and this largely explains the poor retention rates of female combat personnel in Canada’s Armed Forces. He states that this disinterest among Canada’s female combat personnel explains why they exited the Armed Forces at a rate of “2.3 to 6.4 times the attrition rates of their male [combat] counterparts” between circa 1990 and 1997; the rate at which women exit varies between each distinct combat role (e.g. artillery c.f. infantry).

The Ferguson Report diminishes the ability of the Danish Armed Forces to make a serious contribution to the domain of global warfare. This is the first GCP document published after Denmark and Canada integrated women into combat service. Dunn (1998: 16) argues that Denmark was able to annul its GCP primarily because “Combat readiness is not an overarching concern of the Danish military (Dunn 1998: 16).” Dunn (1998: 17) mentions that Denmark’s Armed Forces transformed into an institution that focuses overwhelmingly on peacekeeping when it engages on the international stage. He directly links this dilution of Danish military power to its appointment of female combat personnel, which first occurred at the close of the last century. It is evident that Dunn
(1998: 17) diminishes the combat fighting capacity of Denmark’s Armed Forces when he states: “From the Danish experience, it seems that their combat capability was sacrificed for gender equality.”

The nuanced message Dunn’s statement conveys about Denmark’s experience of integrating women into combat roles is that gender equality and operational readiness are competing alternatives. Dunn (1998: 16) makes the same claim about Canadian Forces and argues that this military institution diluted its biophysical combat entry standards so it could accommodate females who applied for entry but could not reach all strength and fitness criteria required for admission. This discussion in The Ferguson Report is typical of the way other male elites who support the ADF’s GCP persistently portray what Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 844) term the “hard world of international relations, security threats, and war” as a universally masculine social construction. These men imagine female military personnel as legitimate participants in the global theatre of warfare only when they contribute to what Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 844) term “soft options”, such as peacekeeping duties and military roles that support men. Public statements that diminish the reputation of those armed forces that reversed their GCP and appointed female combat personnel seek to replicate hegemonic masculinity in the domain of global warfare and international security. The core way in which they pursue this agenda is by arguing that women cannot compete with men if they engage in combat roles and the frontline theatre of warfare where the most violent and brutal acts of violence occur.
7.4 Conclusion

My examination of the evidence, from a hegemonic masculinities standpoint shows how male elites and others who publicly support Australia’s GCP purposefully defend a regime that underpins hegemonic masculinity in the domains of warfare and militarism. Male elites from Australia’s military institution dominate these discussions. These men enjoy an elevated status within the order of masculinities that exists in Australia’s military institution. These male elites stand to lose the most political influence and cultural prestige should the GCP be abolished and gender equality be eventually realised in their nation’s armed forces and the global domain of international security. Australia’s patriarchal print media is complicit in offering these men a platform to defend the hierarchy of multiple masculinities that define the power structures and organisational culture of Australia’s armed forces and its combat ranks in particular. These observations reaffirm Connell’s argument that men excluded from elite masculine groups defend the male privilege that prevails in key institutions of power because they benefit from the patriarchal dividend bestowed on men as a whole.

Abolishing the GCP poses broader implications that extend beyond the possibility that women may increase their influence within the armed forces. The partial feminisation of the management of large-scale violence would radically alter the local and global order-of-power, which is fundamentally a patriarchal construct. The influence of sovereign nations’ military apparatus is profound. The armed forces underpin the hierarchy of power within the realm of international relations and global security, and the preservation of this construct as a male exclusive entity is what elites and other men actively seek to preserve and replicate when they defend hegemonic masculinity in the
arena of frontline warfare. The armed forces are not just another institution that wields vast economic and political power in the domestic and global arena and this argument underpins the social problem I explore in this thesis. I posit that the GCP is not just another form of discrimination against women but is a dominant factor that underpins the patriarchal order-of-power and state power in particular.
8.1 Conclusion

The persistence of Australia’s GCP is a story about hegemonic masculinity and how this nation’s Armed Forces maintain their exceptional internalised culture by resisting advances to gender equality that occur in their nation’s civilian society. My qualitative content analysis study shows how male elites and others who benefit from the patriarchal dividend ultimately seek to replicate male privilege of militarism and warfare. This reaffirms the argument that hegemonic masculine structures are not self-reproducing.

This thesis unravels the multi-layered identity of the all-male martial fighter, the warrior. The high cultural power bestowed on Australia’s armed forces stem from the unique role it played on the world stage at Gallipoli where it gave birth to the nation. The absence of women from the Infantry Corps at Gallipoli and from Australia’s Infantry Corps until January 2013 is significant. The replication of the ANZAC Digger myth as an all-male warrior archetype underpins multiple binaries that replicate the elevated status men enjoy in Australia’s national project. The absence of a feminine image of the Infantry soldier communicates a message to society that the female body cannot succeed in physically and mentally demanding occupations, especially those that engage in a duel with men. The persistence of Australia’s GCP replicates pre-existing cultural norms that imagine the female body as weak and unable to secure victory for the nation. The nation’s men assume the role of combat fighter to protect their women from the horrors of warfare. This replicates the defender–defended binary that subordinates women to men.

My exploration of the ways male elites and others defend Australia’s GCP in the public domain is noteworthy as this study shows how diminished status of women in Australia’s
Hegemonic masculinities are embedded in interlocking institutions that mutually reinforce hierarchies of elite male privilege. The armed forces are a key source of political power and the influence of this formidable institution extends to the nation’s cultural institutions such as Australia’s war images and war narratives. The state uses the GCP as an instrument that underscores core organising principles of masculinity in the construction and maintenance of state power. The persistence of Australia’s GCP anchors deeper issues about authority and command. The patriarchal state shows a strong interest in preserving hegemonic masculinity in the military institution because this agency is the ultimate guarantor of the power and legitimacy of the state. This influence extends to the global domain.
8.2 Significance of the research findings

By enforcing and defending Australia’s GCP, the state is complicit in violating women’s citizenship rights and replicating hegemonic masculinity in the domain of militarism and warfare. By ratifying CEDAW, a human rights treaty, subject to a reservation that denies its female citizens the opportunity to serve in Direct Combat roles, the state acknowledges that the enforcement of the GCP violates principles of gender equality. Furthermore, the inclusion of Section 43 into the Sex Discrimination Act is evidence that the state does not intend this Act to support the realisation of gender equality in its military institution.

8.3 Implications for further research

The culture of male privilege that characterises Australia’s military institution remains deeply embedded and so it is unlikely the reversal of Australia’s GCP, which takes effect in 2016, will automatically increase the status of women in Australia’s armed forces. In recent decades, multiple inquiries have investigated the diminished status of women in the ADF, yet women remain marginalised throughout this institution. As at August 2015, the ADF and Australia’s Defence Ministry are yet to specify a date when women from Australia’s civilian society may join their nation’s armed forces in Direct Combat roles. Furthermore, neither institution has publicised an “Implementation plan” similar to the transition plan which exists for currently serving female ADF personnel (ADF 2015a). This evidence suggests that the implementation for female personnel into combat roles will likely occur at a very slow pace in the future years to come. I note that the ADF reports that Australia’s Minister for Defence authorised the reversal of Australia’s GCP
on 27 September 2011 and women account for less than 1% of combat personnel four years after this event (ADF 2015a: NP).

It is difficult to foresee that women’s participation rates will match male headcount levels in the near future partially because of low levels of female interest. References to the ‘critical mass’ problem in the ADF’s GCP documents are ominous because they suggest Australia’s Defence Executive are resigned to the inevitability of low female visibility and acceptance by their male peers in this last bastion of masculine privilege.

The ‘Skype’ incident at the ADFA reported by Australia’s media in 2011 is a cause for alarm (Wadham 2012). This scandal suggests that some of the next generation of ADF male leaders harbour misogynistic attitudes towards female cadets. Scholars should investigate whether the Skype scandal is an isolated incident or whether it is indicative of a wider culture of male privilege that exists among the majority of male cadets. These male cadets may become the future flag bearers of a viewpoint that supports hegemonic masculinity in Australia’s armed forces and they may seek to replicate this unjust form of male elitism.
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Chapter Five discusses the exclusion of women from embryo-toxic spray-painting roles in the RAAF.

The selection of this period reflects the availability of data for each category. These statistics synthesise data from Smith (1990; 1995; 1999); Smith and McAllister (1991); ADF (1999; 2001: 289; 2008: 74–75; 169; 2013: Part 3, p. 276); Summers (2000); Ong (2001); Bridges (2005: 88–92) and Harris (2007).

This image was printed from www.news.com.au on 13 April 2011 (News Limited 2011). I have retained the original three pages of this printout, which is a question and answer interview conducted by The Punch Team, News Limited with Neil James, Executive Director of the Australian Defence Association. This image sketched by Kudelka is made prominent as it appears on the first page of this website after the opening paragraph. The mark on the top left corner of this image is the bottom part of an ink pen circle I put around the words “Neil James” in the sentence that appears above this image. This mark is an addition to the original sketch by Kudelka. The opening two sentences of this article authored by The Punch Team states “In wake of the latest [Skype] scandal to hit Defence, Defence Minister Stephen Smith has announced six inquiries, and says Government will fasttrack [sic] changes so women can fight in the most dangerous frontline positions. The Punch spoke to Australian Association executive director Neil James about the move (News Limited 2011: 1).”

In June 2014 and August 2014, I visited www.news.com.au and Jon Kudelka’s corporate website www.kudelka.com.au to extract a digital version of this image. Both websites no longer show this image despite multiple extensive searches using Google search engine and the search engine on the home page of Kudelka’s website. I have converted my printout of this primary data source to a digital image using a photograph of the original article I printed in 2011. A scanned image of the first page of this story published by The Punch Team is displayed in Annex 1, which places the image shown in Figure Three in a broader context.
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Appendix

Figure One

Sketch by Kudelka

Scanned image of the Punch Teach News Article 13 April 2011