

Speaking truth to power: Organisational silencing, uncomfortable knowledge and critical friendship in the contemporary Uniformed Public Services.

Thursday 4 June 2026 13:15 (1h 30m)

Our Uniformed Public Services are struggling to bring about the cultural change required to redress crises of legitimacy, recruitment/retention and unacceptable behaviours. Hierarchy, patriarchy and racism perpetuate silencing, secrecy and non-learning, encouraging ignorance to persist. This roundtable brings together academics, from PGRs for Professors, researching across the sector to explore how power manifests in control over knowledge production and the frailties of knowledge mobilisation practices. Speakers will further consider how institutional systems and processes can create inequity of behaviours, experiences, and outcomes; the relationship between organisational culture and psychological/emotional silencing; and the role of leadership and external scrutiny. They will be asked to address the following questions:

- How does power and control over knowledge production manifest in UPS institutions?
- How does academic knowledge go unheard and how can it be harnessed to foster tangible change?
- How can we challenge organisational silencing and foster transparency around uncomfortable knowledge?
- What is hampering collaboration and shared knowledge transfer at the intersection between academia and these institutions?
- Is critical friendship enough?

Track Classification: Critical Military Studies Working Group