



Royal Commission Update - Hobart Day 47 - 10 August 2022

General remarks

- Impact on families has been a focus of this hearing bloc
- Tasmania's unique circumstance for veterans has also been a focus
- Interim Report to be released tomorrow and then tabled to Parliament
 - Digital and hard copies will be available
 - Not a final report - there will be some issues not addressed at this stage, but will be investigated later
- Next month will be in the UK and Canada to undertake research
- Next hearing in Darwin from 17 October 2022

Counsel Assisting Closing Address

- Tasmania has the highest per capita number of veterans of any State
- Face challenges including distance, service provision, homelessness etc.
- RSL Tasmania evidence recap
 - Difficulties of remote population and challenges of attracting new members
 - Importance of engagement during transition
 - Wraparound and preventative interventions for veterans
 - Services newly located in established RSL buildings in Tasmania
 - Local services for the good and benefit of veterans
- Veteran wellbeing program aspires to create connections between veterans, their families and ESOs
 - Is essentially a capital works program
 - Funding does not extend to the provision of services - presently a termination measure for the funding because there is no funding beyond three years
 - Federal Government determined locations and lead organisations for the VWCs
 - DVA does not evaluate the lead organisations
 - Barriers include sustainability of funding and the size of the country to provide a connected network
- Veterans and community need to have input into the design of the centres - codesign
 - Need for acute and pain services in Tasmania
 - Disparate nature of Tasmanian services
- Linger is a barrier to seeking help - did not wish to appear weak and did not want to appear weak

9:00am - 10:15am - HO1- Lived Experience Witness

- Child of veterans - both parents were in the military - strict upbringing, within the Defence community

- Wants to help veterans once she leaves school
- Pivotal memories of childhood was parents' PTSD - normalised living with PTSD
- Parents went through claims with DVA - recent rejection of mother's VRB claim was disappointing and humiliating
- Beneficial for all families to be offered convenient options for support
- Need additional support in transition, including for children
- Military life should not become family life - Defence members need coaching on how to do this

10:30am - 2:30pm - Brigadier Duncan Hayward, Director General, Defence Force Recruiting - Geoff Gallas, Director, Occupational Psychology, Joint Health Command - Lynette Tyrrell, Chief Psychology Officer, Defence Force Recruiting - Glenn McPhee, Chief Operating Officer, ManpowerGroup Australia

- 17 bricks and mortar buildings, processing 50,000 people
- Once the candidate arrives on the front door of the training institutions, Defence Force Recruiting (DFR) and Man Power Group (MPG) no longer have responsibility
- Ernst & Young review of DFR and ManPower partnership - reviews are ongoing
- 100% achievement against recruitment KPIs has not been met in the fulltime, part-time or gap-year outcomes since 2006
- COVID and low unemployment has had a serious impact on ability to recruit in the last couple of years
- No present KPI relating to retention - not even regarding suitability
- MPG not involved in setting demand targets, but will be informed of changes
 - May provide advice about emerging skillsets
 - Changes in separation levels
 - Specific information about specific cases where DFR may be causal to an individual separation
- Demand for recruits is communicated by DFR by the Services, based on Government requirements
- Marketing and attraction materials builds propensity to consider a career in Defence by building brand recognition and then contains a 'call to action' for a person to get in contact with DFR
 - Do explore harsher realities of the roles during recruitment processes
 - Don't let candidates know about heightened risk of suicide following transition
 - Doesn't consider recruitment a 'grooming' process - joining the ADF is not an impulse purchase, need to understand candidate and the candidate us
- Part of guidance for recruiting is a more inclusionary approach to recruiting - this has changed relatively recently - asking how to recruit someone in, rather than recruit them out

Recruiting targets

- Target means an existing or projected vacancy in recruiting, often for a particular position - can also mean overall numbers required for a service, annual grouping of targets
- Aggregate targets are overall yearly recruiting targets for ADF or service as a whole
- Diversity targets - limited to women, ATSI people, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), targets aimed at people with a STEM background
 - Want ADF to reflect the wider Australian community
- MPG and DFR do not have formal roles in setting aggregate targets, although DFR has some influence - but this is determined as a whole by the Service itself
- Aggregate targets are difficult to achieve for the next five years
 - Proposing to change service delivery model of DFR
 - Want to take 'recruiting to the people', rather than the other way around

- Greater emphasis on candidate experience
- Increase volume and speed of processing

Diverse groups

- No particular aggregate targets set for CALD groups
 - Providing awareness of opportunities to service to new Australians - drive conversations
- Women, ATSI, CALD, and LGBTQIA+ groups are not intrinsically more prone to suicide, but are more prone to discrimination - heightened risk of suicide and suicidality among these groups - what is done in recruiting to support these groups
 - Specialist recruiting teams are available - 'you can't be what you can't see' - provides role models from these groups to show successful examples of what Defence can do, act as mentors, help move people through the system
 - Provide bespoke material, closed social media groups, run information sessions

Psychological screening

- Range between not suitable, below reasonable standard, suitable grade 0 (marginally suitable), suitable grade 1 (low to moderate risk), suitable grade 2 (low risk)
- Not suitable (NS) exception for certain Indigenous recruitment groups, i.e. for the Army Indigenous Development Program or into the Air force, but can't automatically enter Army upon completing the program
 - Additional information is provided to the Service, but no additional structures for support or care
- Below reasonable standard can be waived in certain circumstances

Medical Assessment and recruitment requirements

- Medical waivers can be granted for those with certain skillsets if ADF believes they can support their medical condition during their role
- Physical testing requirements have changed since 2016, as they have over the last century
- Previously recruited to a medical standard above what was required in Service - this has changed i.e. some waivers for recruits who take medication that if not available, would not affect health long-term i.e. eczema
- Physical fitness standards have been relaxed a little on entry, but graduation or exit standards have not changed i.e. fitness assessment not on day 2 at Kapooka, but upon graduation
- Different training standard and entry standard for those who are going into combat roles - has led to changes in conditioning people in training institutions
- Recruit people for potential - greater pool of recruits to draw on - Services then have responsibility to get recruits up to the higher standard
 - It is too hard and too expensive to set someone up for failure
- There is potential for injury in training, but also potential for recruits to improve themselves
- Changed standards to reflect changes in Australian society, better medical treatments, changing roles in the ADF
- Increasing rate of waivers issues for mental health risk factors
 - Some previous flags, such as seeking mental health help through a GP, have changed or are being explored further
 - Is also in line with operational deployed standard

Contract with MPG

- No incentive for MPG to deliver suitable candidates? Not entirely true

Early attrition and separations

- Difficulty in gathering this data - information exists but doesn't take the form of data
- Early discharge is a matter of significant concern to the Royal Commission

Retention rates

- Recruitment and retention are absolutely linked
- Below national average for separation during the first 12 months (15%), more than half as low

Note: Hearings were Private Hearings between 12:45pm and 2:24pm.

Commissioner Questions

- Do not tell potential recruits about the rates of medical discharge from the ADF or suicide risk in ex-serving ADF - is this informed consent
 - Not explicit with rates
 - Do provide context re. risks of serving, stress, possible situations
 - Military service for the majority is a positive experience
- Proposal to increase recruitment to 80,000 by 2040
- Want ADF members to be socially engaged - some worry re. more isolated modern Defence members
- Will be undertaking retention analysis
- Support for more vulnerable recruits or candidates displaying signs of distress following being advised they would not be recruited
 - MPG will put a management plan into place with their practitioner