



Royal Commission Update - Adelaide - 17 July 2023: Day 1

RSL References

Positive:

No references made.

Negative:

No reference made.

Timeline:

9:30am - In session

9:31am - Acknowledgment to Country

9:37am - Acknowledgment to Country by Commissioner Kaldas APM

9:38am - Acknowledgment to Veterans and families, by Commissioner Kaldas APM

10:00am - Brief Adjournment

10:15am - Adjournment ceased

10:18am - Air Commodore, Ashworth; Commodore Young; Brigadier Moss: sworn

10:19am - Erin Longbottom KC questioning Commonwealth Witnesses.

11:34am - questioning continued: statistics used - [REDACTED] document titles.

12:00pm - questioning by Royal Commissioners.

12:14pm - adjournment

1:16pm - session resumed

1:48pm - hearing muted for privacy

1:56pm - hearing continued

2:45pm - audio issues on RCs end

2:52pm - audio issues resolved

3:15pm - adjournment

3:40pm - back in session

5:07pm - adjournment

General summary

- Focus on Career Management and Career Managers - indicia's questioned about effectiveness of improving mental health and social connections;
- Requirement to ensure support for dual serving and sole-serving personnel for relocation; US Studies analysed to see how their policies can be implemented into the Australian context;
- Brigadier Moss, Air Commadore Ashworth and Commodore Young all agreed that more work can be done to improve support to serving ADF members;
- Aimed to bring ratios down to 1:220 for all branches of ADF to ensure adequate support to personnel from Career Managers;
- Currently, facing issues of inadequate support at six hours per year, per person;

Counsel Assisting Opening Address

- Appearing with Kevin Connor, Gabriella Rubicotti:
- Commissions commitment to listen to all Veterans across Commonwealth
- SA Minister for Veterans - unable to attend due to poor health
- Ms. Bowen - Director for SA Veterans
- Mr. Munkhouse - Veterans Health Services, Director for SA Health
- SAs engagement with Health Services focusing on connected communications
- **First theme:** Defence Family and Member Support evidence
- **Second theme:** organisational culture and performance management
- **Third theme:** Veteran-centric modernisation project, DVA complexities
- **Fourth theme:** mental and physical health
- Sought for convenience: evidence of witnesses will traverse multiple themes
- Lived experiences tender list: Matthew Fernandes, Mark Addison, Louis Yenkin, John Berry

9:40am-11:40am - Commonwealth Witnesses:

Times	Witness	Details
All day	<p>Air Commodore Karen Ashworth CSC The Director General Personnel, Air Force</p> <p>Commodore Eric Young CSC RAN Director General, Navy People</p> <p>Brigadier Andrew Moss AM CSM The Director General of Career Management, Army</p>	Commonwealth Witnesses

- High rates of suicide and suicidality are undeniably a national tragedy - 1,600 reported deaths between 1997 and 2020: served on or after 1 January 1985 - Commissioner Kaldas.
- Rate of suicide among ex-serving is 27% higher; 107% for women; compared to general population
- Visited 5Eyes - Washington DC to see how US supports Veterans
- Collaboration between Defence and Veterans US: transition supports pre- and post-discharge
- Primary prevention workforce: data programmes - seek to learn how to tackle these interests.
- Round table with ADF 9:14
- Veteran Affairs update on harmonisation of legislation
- Advocate for ESOs and their support processes and management systems: British Peak Body; non-disclosure order on 2021 Report on Safety and Quality Health Care - qualitative analysis of 429 deaths of former and current serving ADF members between 2001 and 2018.
- Report will be considered by the Commission: AIHW to also contribute to research and analysis.
- Magnitude and complexities of the problem: unaware until Commission was established.
- Occupational stressors of mental health and wellbeing. Continuing to uncover concerning behaviours that have long-lasting trauma impacts on victims.
- DVA not aiding when ADF members seek assistance.
- Cause for optimism: Interim Report - 13 immediate recommendations; 11 accepted.
- Overhauling legislation - eliminating backlog of unprocessed claims

1:15pm - 3:15pm - Witness

- RAAF: A deficiency report is often submitted where there are gaps in operational staffing capabilities. Priority is given to staff in specific positions that require them to support Chain of Command.
- RAN: focus on recruiting and retention. Lateral entries and permanent residents to increase inflows. Maximising retention and growth. ADF systems to better manage demand that is left. UK and allied forces may assist in filling organisational gaps. No further questions by Commissioner
- Questions surrounding Inadequate ADF support services, terrible ADF culture, abuses of power, and failure for continuity of care, information sharing lacking, DVA complex legislation, long protective factors, military justice by Commissioner Kaldas.
- Commodore Young: [questioned by Erin Longbottom KC] - individual's responsibility to engage with ADF; should be the other way around.
- Career Planning Sheet - RAN: individual and office; mandatory planning since implemented by Joint Transitional Authority. Engagement characterised as managing the plot and individual; implications for the Member; and making decisions for that Member.
- Posting is an inherent requirement for joining any ADF position. To achieve capability outcome; people must be moved. It is accepted as a part of service life. Postings accepted as being disruptive to social connections of ADF personnel.
- All accepted with comments made by Air Commodore Ashworth: not every posting results in relocation. 40% of postings have a relocation attached. May include posting in similar geographic area - attempts made by ADF.
- Commissioner Dr Brown: "how critical is posting to developing skills?"
- Brigadier Moss: manual explains experience basis and what experiences you need to gain to increase ranks. May result in experience and exposure to vehicles, weaponry and other machinery or infrastructure required to build Army efficiency.
- Currently look at improving stability in 2023: it was recognised as a problem in December 2021, viewed as a role that this required immediate addressing. KPIs around posting iteration - career management cycle not met but it is an intent.
- Covid lock downs required ongoing stability due to inability to move across borders and outside of LGAs.
- Capacity to do more to improve connections for family and ADF personnel with posting: employment opportunities, schooling, social aspects etc - Commodore Young: *could always do more to improve.*
- Trials undertaken by Army to improve stability and minimise relocation. Other avenues such as questioning it with a Career Manager - raised with relevant deputy director or Air Commodore Young.
- Circumstance necessitates review of decision: psychological, social, etc. DFS - Defence and Family Services: Chaplain or Psychologist does not alter the posting but may assist in the review. 74 compassionate postings in 2022.

3:35pm-4:30pm:

- Fit and proper person: defined to improve time and competency promotions - take into accounts whether individual is appropriate for that posting

- Where there is a pattern of level observed below disciplinary required; then questions are raised to whether that person is a fit and proper person - look at negative indicia.
- RAN, RAAF, ADF looking at US structure to improve Veterans support
- Not meeting fit and proper person test: promotion or appointment will not be moved however, does not prevent future appointment. Delegate can consider circumstances.
- Far too many accounts of sexual allegations and misconduct: Commissioner Brown notes that some people are appointed through Promotions. Commodore Young noted that DART has prevented this.
- Admin action taken by Commodore Young where recurring behaviour has been identified.
- No solution so far - options have been seen as too resource-intensive.
- 6.2% > 9.3% separation ADF rate. Plateaued since retention campaign.

Tendered Evidence by Erin Longbottom KC - Career Management:

Document	Paragraph/Chapter	Notes	Comments
Strategic Defence Review	08.	Full Document on file ¹	Full Document on file
Fundamental Principles of Career Management	1.9	Full Document on file	Full Document on file
Career Management	488	Full Document on file	Full Document on file
[Title Redacted]	10	Full Document on file	Full Document on file
[Title Redacted]	490.	Full Document on file	Full Document on file
Army Career Management Cycle	Redacted	Full Document on file	Full Document on file
Army Careers Managers to Army Members	Table 1.2, Para 15.	Full Document on file	Full Document on file
[Title Redacted]	19	Full Document on file	Full Document on file
Air Force Management Cycle	[Redacted]	Full Document on file	Full Document on file
Air Force Management Cycle	[Redacted]	Full Document on file	Full Document on file
[Redacted]	20	Full Document on file	Full Document on file
Submission ANON-Z1E7-QQYY-U	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
Tender Bundle H	[Redacted]: frequent moves result in increased suicidal tendencies	Rebutted by Commodore Young: not just relocation, but a plethora of stressors..	[Redacted]
Submission ANON-Z1E7-Q174-M	Frequency of location	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
Document DEF.9999.0096.0017	Relocation terms - two years	Full document on file	Full document on file

¹ All notes and comments with *Full Document on File* are contained within the Draft Document – this has been condensed for easy reading.

REDACTED	Tenures across ADF - choices are considered; operational capabilities at the fore.	Full document on file.	Full document on file
Hardship and Difficulties	Focus on Puckapunyal. Darwin is also considered a remote posting. PACMAN - Relocation posting scale. Alpha-Echo .	Full document on file.	Full document on file.
US Report	Less frequent relocations: improve social cohesion, mental health and financial abilities.	Full document on file	Full document on file
DEF.9999.0096.0067	Promotion based on five factors: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Values 2. Performance 3. Qualifications 4. Experience 5. Potential 6. Opportunity 	Full document on file	Full document on file
Document Tender Bundle 15: DVS.0010.0001.0337	Naval Promotion: 10% cleared not for promotion on basis on EQ. Social mastery introduced into criteria. Self-appraisal and senior advisor and assessment. Joint PAR - equal waiting amongst three criteria.		