



## **Royal Commission Update - Adelaide - 19 July 2023**

### **RSL References**

#### Positive:

No references made.

#### Negative:

No references made.

#### **Timeline:**

10:30am - Open  
 10:32am - Affirmation of Witness  
 10:32am - Peter Dunn AO: providing verbal evidence  
 12:09pm - morning tea adjournment  
 12:32pm - in session  
 12:32pm - Affirmation of Witness  
 2:19pm - Questions by Commissioners  
 2:35pm - Adjournment  
 3:21pm - in session  
 3:22pm - Witnesses affirmed  
 4:50pm - Adjournment  
 5:10pm - In session  
 5:11pm - Panel continued  
 5:54pm - Session Adjourned

#### **General summary**

- Defence Personnel Group brought together under single umbrella to bring together wherever possible administration, information systems and twelve months-post Review, to bring together logistics and information sharing.
- Joint operations brought together to streamline movement and reduce administrative workload of joint operations;
- Institutionalised abuse does not occur intentionally - seems to be a culture that may have been inadvertently created through Defence;
- Need to create culture to support ADF personnel to seek mental health support - it is increasingly becoming available, and stigma is decreasing; improvements need to be made with leadership; organisational justice; organisational cohesion; transparency;
- General statistics: police and ADF personnel, suicide rates are higher post-transition;
- Cost benefits on improving workplace wellbeing - better support = decreased injuries, sick days etc;
- A lot could be learned from SES, Police, Ambulance and RFS Organisations across Australia;
- Work place design increases innovation, collaboration and workplace harmony;

Approx Timings	Witness	Description
10:30am -11:30am	<b>Peter Dunn AO</b> Major General (Ret'd) and Crisis Management Advisor	Professional Witness
11:30am-11:45am	Short Adjournment	
11:45am-1:45pm	<b>Dr. Jacqueline Drew</b> Associate Professor, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, and Griffith Criminology Institute, Griffith University	Professional Experience
1:45-2:45	Lunch Adjournment	
2:15-4:15pm	<b>Professor Sharon Parker</b> Director, The Centre for Transformative Work Design and ARC Laureate Fellow, Curtin University  <b>Associate Professor Karina Jorritsma</b> Professor of Practice, Future of Work Institute, Curtin University	Professional Experience
4:15pm-4:30pm	Short adjournment	
4:30pm-6:00pm	Panel Continues	Professional Experience

#### **Counsel Assisting Opening Address**

- Leonid Sheptooha;
  - **Three Themes to address:**
    - Role of Leadership in ADF;
    - Directive vs Inclusive Leadership;

- Effect of Organisational Change in Leadership

**10:30-11:30 – Peter Dunn AO**

**Verbal Evidence Tendered:**

Document/Witness	Paragraph/Type	Body/Comments
Peter Dunn AO	Verbal Evidence	One main issue is recruiting and retention - they go hand in hand. Each three services were studied to see if expectations and needs of new recruits were met.
		Each branch of ADF - did not adequately meet the expectations of new recruits.
		Defence Efficiency Review: Peter undertook review of equipment and structure of Army to determine whether the Defence policies outlined by the Commonwealth Government were met.
		Structures did not meet the policy outlines and major changes were implemented.
		Less separation between Commanders and 'sub-ordinates' - active learning can take place effectively when people deal with each other in various circumstances.
		Studies saw retention failed where Tours ended, and leaders did not altering their leadership style - focus on Bosnia and HMs Armed Forces.
		Commanders need to become more approachable and transparent - credibility can be formed through transparent communication and increase effective leadership and teamwork. They [Commanders] need to be <i>calm, approachable and sensibly optimistic</i> . Consistency is required at times - especially in times of crisis - but flexibility to identify what is required at that time.
		The stigma with mental health is diminishing - ADF personnel need to feel supported to cross the rubicon to seek help and support. The leaders are responsible; or should be; for creating that environment.
There needs to be a slower cycle for postings: whether that's saving money, or stabilising mental and social development - retention is critical. Moves must only be made to achieve organisational outcomes and improving capabilities.		
A new leadership style is suggested to ensure all leaders are - within their toolbox - across techniques to ensure they can implement styles effectively as needed. They need to act and not say. Inclusive leadership is understanding how to get the best out of their battalion or units.		

**Literary Evidence Tendered: Peter Dunn AO.**

Document	Paragraph	Body
Not Applicable		

12:30pm – Dr. Jacqueline Drew

Document/Witness	Paragraph/Type	Body/Comments
Dr. Jacqueline Drew	Verbal Evidence	<p>Studies into police mental health and wellbeing needs to be applied to ADF trauma and critical incidents. The most obvious reason for prevalence rates experienced in police cohorts, further research saw trauma is one piece of the puzzle when understanding psychological distress in populations.</p> <p>Understanding two other stressors: operational and organisational stressors.</p>
		<p>Trauma often takes away from focus on operational and organisational stressors.</p>
		<p>Workplace stressors saw: <i>leadership styles, distress, symptoms rather than causes, and a feeling of being undervalued, the organisation not being fair in decision-making and propelled suicide even if it wasn't the main cause.</i></p>
		<p>Felt trapped in losing their police identity - saw consistently in active and former serving police. Contributions of relationship and family disconnect seen as the immediate identifying precursor to suicide.</p>
		<p>Organisations need to identify precursors to understand individual psychological and social disconnects of their workforce to minimise suicidality and suicide behaviours.</p>
		<p>We need to implement trauma supports and critical incident frameworks to best aid our Police - can be replicated to Defence. For stressors that cannot be eliminated such as shift work - inherent requirements - but many things can be done through organisational requirements and procedures to minimise those stressors.</p>
		<p>Sick leave rates can identify distress or stressors.</p>
		<p>Middle management has a dual role of responsibility to those they lead; but the role and responsibility to report to those higher than them. Trying to achieve organisational priorities and objectives and; also manage psychological needs of their staff.</p>
		<p>Leaders need to be able to manage <i>and</i> support.</p>
		<p>Middle Managers need to create an environment with moral responsibility and an aim to not intentionally create systems that may cause harm. Key metrics need to be flexible with support staff need. Blame cannot be attributed to a certain figure.</p>
		<p>Police recruits are prepared to see trauma and critical incidents: no understanding of the enormity of trauma that follows. However, they expect to join a family, a place, that in light of seeing those incidents, they have a safe place to fall when they return to the station. The opposite is often found.</p>
		<p>Supervisor asked: <i>"you have a report that is overdue by three days - where is it?"</i> After the Officer had witnessed two traumatic incidents in five days. Negative impacts are driving negative outcomes, burnout and other psychosocial impacts.</p>
		<p>Leaders need to model health coping mechanisms - healthy leaders = healthy workforce.</p>
		<p><b>Primary Prevention:</b> significantly reduce or minimise risks of harm;  <b>Secondary Prevention:</b> to identify potential stressors that may increase risks;</p>
<p>Commentary on Day 2: HR and Army siloed problem - not uncommon. Budget constraints and organisational priorities need to be considered against the health of the individual. It should no longer be considered separate - but must be resourced and addressed by every part of the agency.</p>		

**Literary Evidence Tendered, Garbiella Rubagotti:**

Document	Paragraph	Body
Work Design, Organisational Culture, Leadership and Reform: the creation of a 'mentally safe workplace'	REDACTED]	/
Police suicide Deaths in Queensland: Retrospective Study (2023)	EXP.0010.0001.0001	
Mental health and wellness initiatives supporting US law enforcement personnel (2023)	EXP.0010.0001.0009	
A National Study of Police Mental Health in the USA: Stigma, Mental Health and Help-Seeking Behaviours (2020)	EXP.0010.0001.0020	
Expert report on police mental health and wellbeing (2022)	EXP.0010.0001.0033	
Leadership for Wellness: A Strategy for Developing Police and Public Safety Leaders	EXP.0010.0001.0051	
The Health Oriented Leadership Model	EXP.0010.0001.0057	

**3:24pm – Professor Parker and Associate Professor Jorritsma:**

Document/Witness	Paragraph/Type	Body/Comments
Professor Jorritsma	Verbal Evidence	Rosters and activities should be considered: it proposes that it saves on costs - minimises costs needed on sick days, leave, compensation etc.
Professor Parker	Verbal Evidence	Workplaces need to determine the way in which arrangements are appropriate and can be effectively enacted into that workplace. It is a long process that requires many stakeholders. The cost of this is extensive and the saving on costs cannot be seen immediately, but long term, they are there.  Work design is about looking at policy, leaders, culture and that they are all aligned and resulting in a smarter workplace.  Practical implementations require implementation at operational and strategic approach. Senior leadership needs to support new policies; multi-prong, multi-level approach. Success requires strategy to include [genuine] involvement.
Professor Jorritsma	Verbal Evidence	There are risks with ADF, FIFO and other shift workers that have seen a lack of sleep, or disturbed sleep schedules leading to ongoing injuries and poor health management which contributes to poor mental ill-health.
Professor Jorritsma	Verbal Evidence	At this stage, the work we are engaged in, is about design criteria for future submarine platforms, rather than directly today - we have communicated our concerns and run trials, such as watch-keeping structures on the Collins Class Submarines - it is not for an intervention on the current fleet.
Professor Jorritsma	Verbal Evidence	Providing workers with a purpose improves morale.
Professor Parker	Verbal Evidence	All work provides people with purpose - not only high-status roles.
Professor Jorritsma	Verbal Evidence	Good work design needs to be implemented by many levels of the work place. This includes HR, rostering, management etc.
Professor Parker	Verbal Evidence	Supporting people to raise concerns encourages a safe environment which in turn, improves productivity, efficiency and work place harmony. Having respected autonomy is essential in ensuring a mentally safe work place.

**Literary Evidence Tendered, Gabriella Rubagotti:**

Document	Paragraph	Body
Not Applicable		

## Questions by Commissioners and Counsel:

Parties	Parties	Question	Response
<b>Peter Dunn AO</b>			
Counsel, Leonid Shetooha	Peter Dunn AO	How does good leadership impact an organisation like Defence?	In public and private enterprise, it is good to have leadership to maximise efficiency and improve morale. Good leadership allows for effective teamwork and promotes success - that influence directly impacts organisational culture and organisational climate. Organisational climate is directly influenced by leadership and these things impacts the individuals.
		What role does a shared sense of vision aid in maintaining a happy and healthy workforce?	That vision must not be contested - it is felt right through Government, down to leadership and into the troops in the field. They need clear communication about the outcomes that are sought and requirements that need be met.
		What can Defence do to improve leadership?	The leader at every level needs to be able to articulate that purpose and need to be able to explain what it is and why.
		How can effective leadership be achieved in Defence?	Clear communication in from Government, and Defence, needs to be consistent.
		What role does accountability play in effective leadership?	Leaders are accountable in every sense - in every organisation; Defence - they need to know that leaders support them and are clear in expressing their accountability. It is important - essential - that everybody knows leaders are accountable for their actions.
		What style of leadership is in Defence?	Leaders need to have a number of tools to be able to operate effectively. Two keys styles are <i>directive and inclusive leadership</i> - these are not mutually exclusive but are very different.  <b>Directive:</b> best used when dealing with familiar problems.  <b>Inclusive:</b> ambiguity and unfamiliar situations; requires leaders to better understand the skills of a diverse group of people and leverage perspectives to solve the problem at hand.  Inclusive leadership is often required to overcome problems quickly; situational analysis needs swift resolutions.
		What are the key elements of inclusive leadership?	"Not standing around, holding hands, singing <i>kumbayah</i> "  To understand the people they are leading - understand capabilities. To also hold leaders, themselves, to account. Inclusive leadership is important in Defence because the operational capabilities can not be optimised if there is a lack of active learning.
		What role does gender play in inclusive leadership?	In my role, we aimed to recruit more women into Defence and introduce them to more combat-heavy roles. Inclusive leadership is a style that needs to be improved at <i>all levels of Defence</i> , and should be the dominant leadership style. The introduction of diverse groups aids in providing active learning.
		How does a Commander strike a balance between directive and inclusive leadership?	It's situational based - an unfamiliar environment requires directive leadership; it is more effective as it is more nuanced and alternatives and care in circumstances often provides better operational outcomes.
What are the attributes of a poor leader?	If a poor leader does not seek feedback on their performance from Commanders and sub-ordinates, and does not seek out weak signals, then that leader will find that they do not have many followers.  This presumes that the leader has honesty and integrity; which are essential requirements to be a good leader in the ADF.		
Commissioner Brown	Peter Dunn AO	Is there anything that can be done to improve mental health and well being through leadership?	It is up to the leaders to create a culture and a climate to support ADF personnel - it isn't always going to be a happy gathering - but it has to be - overall - a good place to work in.  The mental health of the team is incredibly important to foster a workplace that can be worked in successfully.
		What is the key element in implementing organisational change?	There has to be a reason - a transparent and understandable reason. Once there is an identified reason; there has to be a plan to implement that change. Often, implementation fails due to Commanders are unaware about their role in transformational roles - they have to understand the basis of the new role within weeks, or, at most, months.  Once that foundational learning and planning phase ends, change needs to be initiated. Leaders should be held accountable for that change. There

Commissioner Brown	Peter Dunn AO		needs to be less reliance on external Committees and Government agencies.
		What is the most difficult aspect of organisational change? How is ADF to overcome resistance?	The hardest thing about organisational change is removing old structures and implementing the new ones - there may be resistance to change; needs to be better understanding of new roles and organisational structure.  We cannot continue to use what we are familiar with because the ADF is an everchanging organisation - it is imperative that there is also bipartisan support from Government, and from all people within the ADF.  The impact of elections and political change also influences the effectiveness and efficiency of ADF movement. We need Chief/s to lead together - cohesively, and bipartisan political support to minimise unnecessary interruptions.
		Recruitment requires specific changes. What did you do?	Took a review under all the ads and looked at recruit training. The key part was to understand what happened to recruits when they were sent to their postings. When they arrived at their Units ongoing monitoring was used.
		Could you provide the Commission with comments on culture and climate of the ADF?	I have an amazing amount of respect for the ADF and what it is called upon to do. It is faced with a number of dilemmas in responding to operational issues, which the community is unsure.  There are political issues that are involved with the climate and culture, and as a result, of recent years, been overworked, and I find that a lot of the things that have occurred in terms of the operational tempo, has been, pushing people to the point of where everything is familiar, however, is asymmetric. Repeated responses have occurred to normalise things that should not be and is a major concern I hold.
	Is, in your opinion, suicide a pressing issue amongst veterans?	Yes, it is distressing to think we need a Royal Commission to address veteran suicide and their associated mental health issues.	
	Peter Dunn AO	Do you have any advice to the ADF?	Stability. Introduce guidance Counsel- religious or spiritual or emotional - need to be enacted to support and foster a healthy environment. Well-supported troops lead to effective combat outcomes.
Commissioner Douglas	Peter Dunn AO	During drilling, were there any superior officers to witness bullying, harassment or negative behaviours?	They need to know about it - ADF Commanders need to walk around, have a look, and create an environment to foster trust for troops to feel comfortable enough to raise this. Needs to be more than functions at ship launches, birthdays and football matches.
Commissioner Kaldas		How do leaders need to address this?	
		How may we recommend ways to improve accountability and bring in accountability across all levels?	This has been a critical issue on many occasions during my career; I have personally taken steps to remove people for unacceptable behaviour. There has to be an environment for troops to report unacceptable behaviour - physical mechanisms to enact professional standards.  Unit levels need to see accountability from their Commanders - not some committee in Canberra.
<b>WITNESS DR. JACQUELINE DREW, A/P</b>			
<b>Parties</b>	<b>Parties</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Gariella Rubagotti	Dr. Drew	Can you explain to the Commissioners about your further studies?	Police suicide has little research - most work underdone internationally and saw a retrospective study with Queensland Police. Attempting to identify the numbers of Officers who had left the service; and were in active service; when dying by suicide.  In almost all cases from Qld police, there were workplace factors in their suicide death, even where they had left the service. Average 7-9 years post-service; struggling significant periods before dying by suicide.  Other body of research: funded by Australian Research Linkage Grant - looking at Police Officer mental health; includes all professional staff and police officers.  Aim: understand proportional harm, unpack what true contribution of trauma organisational operation stress, and guide studies to reduce prevalence rates.

		How would an early warning system would operate?	<p>It is modelled off research conducted in the United States – and it can be applied here. It is used for integrity, we build predictive models and as data is developed, we can predict – for example – five complaints against an officer, in the first year, will see a 33% increased chance of a major integrity complaint in their tenth year.</p> <p>We model connection between social and psychological outcomes. Prioritise resources – all stressors will be considered and what is the most significant outcome is in terms of major stressors.</p> <p>Can diagnose issues in particular work units. Stressors may be difficult to identify completely if there are localised units.</p>
		Are there supports for leaders to initiate change appropriately?	There cannot be blame placed upon middle management who attempt to initiate change – our leadership programmes are focused on command and control – there needs to be support to develop good leadership and traits to improve our leadership.
Gabriella Rubagotti	Dr. Jacqueline Drew	Would a surveillance assist in monitoring health?	<p>The final pillar of surveillance would be around leaders being aware and in a position, with support, to evaluate the workplace stress, to value and have a sense of responsibility for what is going on, negate risks, and based on that awareness, the leader actively tries to eliminate factors that cause harm.</p> <p>This is not independently done – they need research and organisational support to be able to give them the evidence and skills to create the factors that are the recipe for a healthy workplace.</p>
		Explain practical means for physical wellbeing?	Practical implementation of research and relationships discovering – predictors and outcomes – practical intervention; accurate identification.
		Is it possible to eliminate stressors?	<p>No, but the best approach is to look at innovative ways to reduce the harm; reduce the hazard. Supporting leaders at all levels within the agency to prioritise, to have, to identify a particular hazard. Look at ways to reduce it.</p> <p>Supporting officers through acknowledgment and validating hazard – critically important – seen as social support.</p>
		How are agencies supposed to overcome the disconnect between intent and the lack of resources or funding?	<p>Transparency and realistic goals need to be set – acknowledging – there may not be a perfect solution and not over-promising and under-delivering.</p> <p>Eliminate burnout and psychological distress – unrealistic – but minimise the impacts and exposure.</p>
		Can you please give us an indication for examples where you have seen an organisation engage with the family well, as a protective strategy?	<p>There is a need to include and consider families through traumatic events. Especially, those fields with strong identities. The individual needs to have a whole wraparound – the organisation does not end its duty of care at clock-off but must continue into all aspects of their life. Currently, unaware of protective strategies.</p>
Commissioner Brown	Dr. Jacqueline Drew	In terms of trying to implement something, do you need diagnostics at the local level or can you pitch right in with the solution?	<p>The approach we are taking is multi-layered – collecting data across the state and use of other data sets to highlight priority of hazards.</p> <p>Developing a whole suite to be run by agency, or in collaboration to develop interventions.</p>
		How often would this training be introduced?	Ideally, it would be done during onboarding processes – and reviewed frequently.
		How are perceptions managed; feelings of betrayal stemming from failure to address problems?	<p>Acknowledgment of perceptions: understanding embitterment – not a fleeting feeling of cynicism; has violated basic beliefs. Relevance to organisational structure and moral integrity.</p> <p>Support: not perceived, but received.</p>
Commissioner Douglas	Dr. Jacqueline Drew	The data about post-service statistics seems sketchy. Is that still the case?	Yes – there is difficulties in confirming studies, however, had support from Qld Police.
Commissioner Kaldas		What advice do you have to give us for recommendations to Parliament and addressing	Takes an acknowledgment. Leadership training does not always replicate into practice. Leadership training is different from enactment.

		concerns with leadership in ADF?	<p><b>First recommendation:</b> review of all leadership programmes that currently occur and how we augment them - may not be in the first instance.</p> <p><b>Second recommendation:</b> learn and leverage from existing frameworks.</p>
<b>WITNESSES: Professor Parker, Professor Jorritsma</b>			
<b>Parties</b>	<b>Parties</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Garbiella Rubagotti	Professor Parker	What is the importance of focusing on wellbeing?	Employers need to ensure that they are abiding by legal requirements to protect the mental and physical health of employees. Good health = good business.
		Can you please explain the Well at Work Framework	Compliance does not always result in good wellbeing. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mitigate illness;</li> <li>2. Prevent harms</li> <li>3. Promote thriving;</li> </ol>
		What risks can be found through automation?	Psychosocial risks - people whose skillset are not utilised properly - may increase risks for negative psychosocial outcomes.
Commissioner Brown	Professor Parker	Can you please tell me about the Smart Work Design Model?	Smart Work Design Model: a summary on one hundred years of research - evidence based model: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stimulate</li> <li>2. Mastery</li> <li>3. Agency/Autonomy</li> <li>4. Relational</li> <li>5. Tolerable demands;</li> </ol> <p>Tolerable demands and consideration needs to be considered to shift workers and FIFO workers - can strongly impact the mental wellbeing of individuals.</p>
Commissioner Brown	Professor Jorritsma Professor Parker	Are any of these topics complementary to the previous sessions?	Yes - wellbeing comes through strong leadership; <p>Yes - the assistance of briefings will communicate strong, holistic support to encourage smooth transitions. Defence should encourage exploration of other avenues instead of focusing on leadership.</p> <p>People can be encouraged to find purpose in their work if they are stimulated in the tasks they are given.</p>
Commissioner Brown	Professor Parker	How much does culture influence capacity for work redesign?	Centralised work places struggle to adapt to new, more flexible and inclusive methods of leading. Centralised work places may not work in Defence. Command-Control leadership is essential - however - a lot of work in Defence is about collaboration, teamwork, and community work - Command-Control cannot be effective. <p>That culture will make it more difficult, but not a reason to change leadership and culture within ADF.</p> <p>Centralised workplaces limit creativity, perspectives and in some cases, where there is a time to modify leadership styles,</p> <p>Good work design = capabilities improved and mental health stability</p>
Commissioner Brown	Professor Parker	What are the risks of undertaking new work design?	Cultural resistance.
Commissioner Kaldas	Professor Jorritsma	How would work design occur in the Military and Special Forces where they require rigidity?	What opportunities and resources exist that may support mental health and wellbeing? Research and studies that have been undertaken on police forces across Australia may be able to be replicated, and slightly manipulated to transfer datasets to ensure that work design is appropriate for those special units or the general ADF. <p>This includes the aspects of rostering; shift work; agency and appropriate levels of decision level makings - not necessarily involved in decision making;</p>