

Defence Portfolio

INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 1)

Mr Julian Hill MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 13 June 2023:

What retrospective analysis does Defence undertake to determine the operational and human-level impact of sustained support to domestic crisis has had on the ADF from both an individual and collective perspective?

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the question:

ADF personnel involved in Domestic Operations participate in the Domestic Operations Demounting Psychology Screen (DODPS) which is part of the Mental Health Screening Continuum.

The DODPS contains questions on the overall experience of the deployment and anticipated difficulties on returning to their home location or unit. It also contains standardised mental health screens that assess exposure to deployment related stressors and psychological symptoms. The screening process also includes opportunities for psychoeducation and interventions to assist with managing minor mental health issues, or facilitate referral for further treatment or support if required.

Mental health surveillance provides information on potential occupational and operational stressors that are associated with specific deployments, such as threats related to exposure to trauma (e.g. combat related events, exposure to human suffering or misery), as well as non-traumatic deployment experiences (e.g. separation from family and friends).

At an individual level, mental health screening aims to support ADF personnel by facilitating early intervention and support if needed. At a population level, data collected through operational mental health screening is used by Defence as part of mental health surveillance reporting.

Mental health surveillance reporting has occurred for ADF domestic operations in the last four years. This includes Operation Bushfire Assist, Operation Flood Assist, Operation COVID-19 Assist and Operation Aged Care Assist. This has provided population level insights regarding perceived deployment experiences, deployment stressors and exposures, as well as mental health experiences.

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INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 2)

The Honourable Andrew Wallace MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 13 June 2023:

What are your diggers, sailors and airmen saying about their involvement in domestic crises support activities; what are the retention figures and exit interviews saying?

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the question:

The Joint Transition Authority collects a broad range of data that includes reasons for transition, and post-transition social connectivity, housing, employment/meaningful engagement, health, education, transport and finance outcomes.

The case management data collected by the Joint Transition Authority has not indicated ADF members holding a particular view about, or transitioning because of, service on domestic operations. The most common reasons provided for transition decisions are professional/career progression, personal/family, work-life balance and geographic location.

The YourSay Exit survey also captures information on the reasons for ADF personnel leaving the Service. Similar to the Joint Transition Authority data, the most recent YourSay results reflect the top three reasons personnel leave the ADF being ‘job satisfaction’, ‘career prospects outside of the military’, and ‘work-life balance’.

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INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 3)

The Honourable Andrew Wallace MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 13 June 2023:

What data is being captured from the relevant service-level exit interviews that references their lived experience from domestic operations-crises?

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the question:

The Joint Transition Authority collects a broad range of data that includes reasons for transition, and post-transition social connectivity, housing, employment/meaningful engagement, health, education, transport and finance outcomes.

This also captures Reserve members rendering service under SERVOP C (Continuous Full Time Service) arrangements for Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Operations, inclusive of domestic operations.

The case management data collected by the Joint Transition Authority has not indicated ADF members holding a particular view about, or transitioning because of, service on domestic operations. The most common reasons given for transition decisions are professional/career progression, personal/family, work-life balance and geography.

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INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 4)

Ms Susan Templeman MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 13 June 2023:

Have you got any feedback or insight into how individuals feel about stepping into a disaster role? Was the feedback tracked during the last four years or more currently; please provide more detail to break down the tipping point. Was it the role being undertaken and/or time away from core roles?

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the question:

Mental health surveillance reporting has occurred for ADF domestic operations in the last four years. This includes Operation Bushfire Assist, Operation Flood Assist, Operation COVID-19 Assist and Operation Aged Care Assist. The data does not identify or determine “tipping points” but provides population level insights regarding perceived deployment experiences, deployment stressors and exposures, as well as mental health experiences. The majority of ADF personnel involved in supporting these operations reported a positive experience. Approximately 9 per cent of personnel indicated their role in a domestic operation was a deployment stressor. This is attributed to perceptions that tasks were not aligned with their Defence role; and feeling unprepared for some tasks, such as working in aged care.

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INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 5)

Mr Julian Hill MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 13 June 2023:

What is the out-turned average cost of a non-Officer in the Army who has been involved? Are we wasting taxpayers money by using highly trained personnel instead of scaling up state and territory emergency responses to match the new environment? What is the cost differential between using a Taipan as opposed to an AW139?

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the question:

The average cost of a non-officer rank in the Australian Army using 2023-24 Portfolio Budget Statements price basis, is \$126,475 per annum. This represents the average cost of salaries, leave, allowances and super, for non-officer ranks.

The cost of operating an MRH for FY 2022-23 was \$58,020.65 per hour. This is an increase from FY 2021-22 where operating costs were \$48,752.50 per hour.

The cost of operating an AW 139 for FY 2022-23 was \$13,185.72 per hour.