

Defence Portfolio

INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 1)

Senator the Hon David Fawcett asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 28 September 2023:

Senator Fawcett quoted from Defence's inquiry submission, 'Since late 2021, Defence has been executing a T&E Strategy that has made steady progress in improving T&E competency and transparency...' (paragraph titled, The Defence T&E Governance Model refers). From late 2021 until now over 20 of the most competent T&E practitioners in Defence, trained at a cost of over \$1 million dollars each, have left Defence to seek employment elsewhere. If progress is being made, why has there been quite a significant departure of probably the most competent practitioners within Defence?

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to Senator the Hon David Fawcett's question:

The Defence Test and Evaluation (T&E) Directorate is responsible for the oversight of T&E across the maritime, land, air, cyber and space domains. This includes the delivery of the Defence T&E Practitioner Course to provide domain-agnostic, short-course training, supplemented by domain-specific on-the-job training when participants return to their workplace.

Since introducing this course in May 2021, 246 new T&E practitioners have completed the course, significantly increasing the competency levels for T&E related positions across all domains. As these T&E practitioners gain experience in their respective domains and undertake advanced training through industry or military courses in the coming years, Defence's overall T&E capacity and capability will grow.

The Senator's question regarding the retention of 20 Defence T&E practitioners relates specifically to personnel who have undertaken highly specialised and established Flight Test training offered by international military and commercial schools. Efforts to retain this workforce are part of Defence's broader recruitment and retention initiatives.