

APPENDIX 4

SAMPLE QUOTATIONS FROM HANSARD

The following random quotations from Hansard transcripts reflect the depth of feeling amongst ADF personnel on recruiting and retention issues.

But as a father I am going to say ‘ No way’ because he no longer has security in the Defence Force, he no longer is able to work for 20 years and then retire on a pension and he is not going to get looked after as well as people did 10 or 15 years ago. If he gets broken in an early part of his career he will be kicked out of the Army.¹

The basic issue is that our commitments are too great and every year the Navy shrinks. Every year we have the same commitments; every year we squeeze the people we have got left. We have to tie ships up. They have got to have the courage at the top to say, ‘We can’t do that. We haven’t got the people to do it’.²

There is a lifestyle sacrifice in being a soldier, and not all jobs have a lifestyle sacrifice as great as being a member of the Defence Force. If you keep chipping away at that and putting more on the sacrifice side of the lifestyle, people are going to get unhappy. The perception is that there has been more stacked up on the sacrifice than on the benefits.³

The six week course at Kapooka is too long for a lot of people to go on. A lot of people say, ‘We cannot get six to seven weeks off. We just won’t join.’ I know a lot of people who would join if they could do a two week course.⁴

CSP has a lot to answer for. A lot of guys cannot even get an ashore draft because there is nowhere for them to go on a base. I think for the chefs, Stirling, Cerberus and Kuttabul are the only places because everywhere else is done by civil chefs.⁵

I was on *HMAS Collins* and we had a comms mast failure. There was no one on board the submarine because it is a civil contractor job. Collins pulled in alongside the wharf and they paid Raytheon to fix the comms mast. We are not getting the experience to work on this kit to maintain our skills.⁶

1 Witness 10 *Committee Hansard*, 17 August 2001, p. 550

2 Witness 5 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2001, p. 301

3 Witness 4 *Committee Hansard*, 23 July 2001, p. 210

4 Witness 7 *Committee Hansard*, 19 July 2001, p. 550

5 Witness 5 *Committee Hansard*, 19 July 2001, p. 84

6 Witness 9, *Committee Hansard*, 19 July 2001, p. 90

A lot of work is out-sourced. That is how we are losing our jobs, because most of the work we can do. This work that they out-source, that they civvy trade, the guys do not get experience on.⁷

I have cancelled my galley card, my swipe card, and I know that a lot of the recruits coming out are doing it, because the food is below standard.⁸

Then they get to work and they cannot do their job. For example, for artillery, for the financial year we have 433 bombs of all natures allocated to fires. That does not sound too bad, I guess. If you put that in perspective, off the top of my head, we have six activities occurring this financial year, with that amount of ammunition we have approximately 70 bombs per exercise. There is not enough training to get skills where they need to be to fight a war.⁹

As the CO of the base I am very concerned that the overall workforce available for the base is 25-30% below what we say we need. A lot of the services that used to be provided within the forces are now being provided by contractors, and far less flexibly than they were under the old system, such that we are constrained by the contracts which are written for five years.¹⁰

My school is currently 25 per cent understaffed. It is mostly understaffed at the able seaman and leading seaman levels, and they are the people who do a lot of the grassroots training. That means that a lot of my senior sailors have to do a lot of extra work to do the jobs that would otherwise have been delegated down.¹¹

Even though we are on high readiness notice here as part of the RDF, I have 50, approaching 60 vacancies in the new year, out of 500 in my unit. Whilst we are on high readiness there are some parts here that do not attract reasonable quantity or type of ammunition so that we can do our job. I have soldiers who are carrying weapons which they have not fired and will not fire for some considerable time.¹²

It is a cumulative effect. If you keep chipping away at that and putting more on the sacrifice side of the lifestyle, people are going to get unhappy. The perception is that there has been more stacked up on the sacrifice than on the benefits.¹³

7 Witness 19, *Committee Hansard*, 17 August 2001, p. 563

8 Witness 9, *Committee Hansard*, 26 July 2001, p. 345

9 Witness 6, *Committee Hansard*, 23 July 2001, p. 216

10 Witness 12, *Committee Hansard*, 26 July 2001, pp. 334–335

11 Witness 15, *Committee Hansard*, 26 July 2001, p. 357

12 Witness 2, *Committee Hansard*, 17 August 2001, p. 542

13 Witness 2, *Committee Hansard*, 23 July 2001, p. 210

It looks as if we are only interested in retaining people until around the six to 10 year mark.¹⁴

With MSBS you are simply going to exit with your contributions, and you may potentially have to wait another 15 to 25 years before you will get your pension and the rest of your contributions. Under MSBS there is certainly nothing there to attract a person to really want to stay any longer than 10 years.¹⁵

We have no hook for people to hang on for 20 years because of the change from DFRDB to MSBS. Consequently, junior soldiers, NCOS or junior officers get to the eight, nine or 10 year mark, as I did, and have a look around and, if they have not got a hook to get to 20, they are going to look outside.¹⁶

The recent reduction in the actual amount has impacted quite significantly on the morale of families. In dollar terms it has gone down from \$1,198 to \$995, from 95 per cent to 68 per cent. The 68 percent was a deal negotiated between the government or Defence hire with Qantas. The interesting point though is that you find it is not applicable to Defence Force civilians.¹⁷

The cooks and stewards believed they were being flogged and that the work pressures on them were intense for the remuneration they were gaining.¹⁸

The deterioration of allowances is also an issue. 3 years ago we won a wage rise of 41/2 per cent to be phase in over three years. That now seems to be totally covered by the reduction in allowances to members of the service.¹⁹

People going from the 3rd Brigade say from here to Training Command. You are losing your zone allowance. Therefore people are reluctant to ask for these postings.²⁰

We are not civies, and we need to stop our fringe benefits and conditions of service being eroded and taxed. It is as simple as that. You would be surprised at how many more people will stay in the Army and join the Army.²¹

My main goal was to become an electronic technician. I was led to believe that I would become a level 3 technician. I did my training at *HMAS*

14 Witness D, *Committee Hansard*, 18 July 2001, p. 47

15 Witness 28, *Committee Hansard*, 23 July 2001, pp. 253–254

16 Witness 6, *Committee Hansard*, 17 August 2001, p. 546

17 Witness 5, *Committee Hansard*, 23 July 2001, p. 208

18 Witness 26, *Committee Hansard*, 19 July 2001, p. 109

19 Witness 16, *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2001, p. 273

20 Witness 18, *Committee Hansard*, 17 August 2001, p. 561

21 Witness 3, *Committee Hansard*, 17 August 2001, p. 545

Cerberus and did all my training. It was supposed to be TAFE accredited but I was told later that it was not.²²

I enlisted as a medic yet there are no qualification courses available. I was told that the two week course was replaced with the 33 week course due to the requirements of duty of care. To do this course I have to quit my job and would receive less pay than my current job. I can understand why they cancelled the two week course but I cannot understand how it has taken over two years for a replacement course to be approved.²³

If you encourage a guy who has been in for 10 years to go and do a trade or offer some sort of incentive to him to get more qualifications, you are not losing out in the long run. You have ten years of experience and rank in the Army, and that is impossible to replace.²⁴

The older guys before the Technical Trade Rationalisation have their original trade. We do not have the paperwork for our subsequent trade. The RAAF would have to start doing licensed aircraft mechanic courses to have our new trade recognised.²⁵

Any organisation would have no credibility employing somebody else to do their recruiting for them. They would have none whatsoever with somebody walking in out of the street. If I walked in today and saw a civilian standing there and nobody in uniform, I could not take it seriously. There would be no credibility whatsoever.²⁶

The recruitment plans that are put out are solely base on short-term careers in the military.²⁷

I was trying to go FT RAAF as an aircraft technician. They contacted me twelve months after my application. It takes too long and that is something to do with the system.²⁸

On the issue of retention, it simply comes down to pure frustration with change. The pace of change in Defence over the last few years is so rapid and so apparently poorly administered that we do not know where we are going.²⁹

22 Witness 13, *Committee Hansard*, 19 July 2001, p. 97

23 Witness 4, *Committee Hansard*, 19 July 2001, pp. 139–140

24 Witness 8, *Committee Hansard*, 23 July 2001, p. 223

25 Witness 9, *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2001, p. 269

26 Witness 14, *Committee Hansard*, 23 July 2001, p. 226

27 Witness 22, *Committee Hansard*, 23 July 2001, p. 236

28 Witness 3, *Committee Hansard*, 19 July 2001, p. 138

29 Witness 35, *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2001, p 281

You have got to offer them something. We are losing our people at the 10–12 year mark because there is nothing to keep them in.³⁰

There is no incentive at the six–year mark for a person to stay on in the Air Force if they want to. It is the same at the 12 year mark: if you re–sign there is no incentive to stay on if you do not look like getting promoted. Why can't we have a retention benefit each time we sign on?³¹

I have a sword of Damocles at my head in that they cannot tell me more than six months in advance where I am going to be, basically. They cannot give you anything specific.³²

The six–week course at Kapooka is too long for a lot of people to go on. A lot of people say, 'We cannot get six to seven weeks off. We just won't join.' I know a lot of people who would join if they could do a two–week course.³³

Why the hell can't we stay in our postings for as long as we wish?³⁴

I have seen the Army go from one where the senior ranks actually cared about their soldiers to one where they care more about feathering their own nest. He [another member] simply discharged because he could not get his de facto paperwork filled out.³⁵

The whole point of having a Defence Force is to have that surge capacity, to be able to go and operate without collapsing back home. At this point here, we are right down, we are understaffed.³⁶

30 Witness 1, *Committee Hansard*, 19 July 2001, p. 80

31 Witness 5, *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2001, pp. 265–266

32 Witness 10, *Committee Hansard*, 26 July 2001, p. 350

33 Witness 7, *Committee Hansard*, 19 July 2001, p. 146

34 Witness 20, *Committee Hansard*, 17 August 2001, p. 564

35 Witness 19, *Committee Hansard*, 17 August 2001, p. 562

36 Witness 48, *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2001, p. 294

