PULSE REPORT

RESULTS OF THE NAVAL POLICE COXSWAIN WORKFORCE PULSE

2021

DIRECTORATE OF STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH

JOINT CAPABILITIES GROUP

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Naval Police Coxswain Workforce PULSE

Directorate of Strategic and Operational Mental Health (DSOMH), 2021

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Executive Summary

Unit: Naval Police Coxswain Workforce

PULSE Survey Requested by: s47E(d)

PULSE Administration date: 22nd June – 9th July 2021

Key Findings

- Overall PULSE results varied by workgroup. Results indicate room for improvement in a number of aspects of Naval Police Coxswain/Officer's (NPC/O's) roles within all workgroups.

- Results suggest that the workforce requires better role clarity and job parameters. Decisions about the future of workforce should be clearly communicated to personnel.

- Confidence in leadership can be improved across all workgroups, particularly confidence in the ASLT/SBLT up to the LCDR levels.

- Workplace hassles related to workload, work-life balance and promotion of inexperienced staff were commonly reported by NPC/O's across all workgroups.

- NPC/O's within the Navy-Sea Postings workgroup report slightly lower satisfaction with job resources such as communication, support, and fairness. However, they also report greater job satisfaction and commitment.

- NPC/O's within Navy-Shore Commands and JMPU report higher levels of burnout. This may be impacting on retention, with a third of members within these groups reporting a desire to leave their workgroups. Just under half of NPC/O's within Navy-Shore Commands report an intention to leave the ADF in the next 2 years.

- Change management processes are generally viewed as ineffective across the workforce.

- The proportion of each workgroup reporting at risk of psychological distress or risky drinking behaviour was on par or below the ADF average.

Organisation Specific

- A majority of JMPU *agree* the term 'Coxswain' should be dropped from the Category name. The majority of Navy-Sea Postings *disagree* that the term should be dropped.

- Most personnel across all workgroups agree NPC/Os should be subject matter experts across constabulary type operations.

- Role ambiguity appears to be a significant factor that should be targeted by command.

Naval Police Coxswain Workforce PULSE Administration Details

Overview

The PULSE is an organisational climate survey requested by commanders to provide a snapshot of their unit. PULSE results inform commanders of perceived personnel-related strengths and weaknesses and provide a framework for future decision-making. The report is intended to be accompanied by a verbal brief by local psychology elements or DMHSR. Further information and background about the PULSE survey and model can be found at Annex A. **To assist with interpretation, a bolded statement is provided before each graph outlining how the data should be interpreted.**

Reason for Request

The Naval Police Coxswain (NPC) workforce is currently subject to organisational reform. A PULSE was requested as a data capture activity to help inform the development of career strategies and assist with the reform. The PULSE was administered to NPC/O (Naval Police Coxswain/Officer) personnel within Navy-Shore Commands, (N-SC), Navy-Sea Postings (N-SP) and Joint Military Police Unit (JMPU).

PULSE Engagement

The overall response rate was 61%. This is a good response rate. JMPU had the highest engagement.

Throughout the report, comparisons are made by workgroup and to the PULSE average. Additional demographic breakdowns can be found in Annex B.

Subunit/directorate	Posted Strength	Number of Responses	Percentage Responding
Navy – Shore Commands (N-SC)	114	62	54
Navy – Sea Postings (N-SP)	68	38	56
Joint Military Police Unit (JMPU)	55	50	91
Total	**237**	**150**	**61**

Naval Police Coxswain Workforce PULSE Detailed Results

Job Resources

The figure below provides an overview of each workgroup's results for each of the 4 job resources measured by the PULSE. **Lower scores reflect lower job resources and therefore higher risk of job strain.**
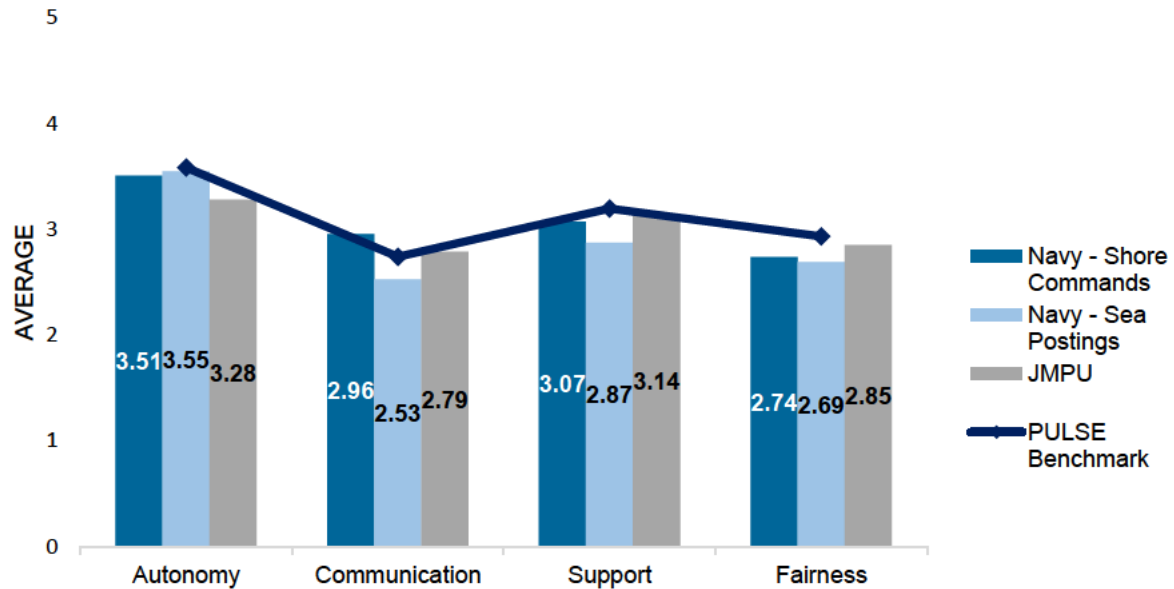
Note: The benchmark is the average obtained from all PULSE's administered 2014-2021 (n=23038).

Results for all workgroups followed a similar pattern to the benchmark. There is room for improvement in perceptions of communication, support and fairness, particularly for NPC/Os within N-SP.

Leadership

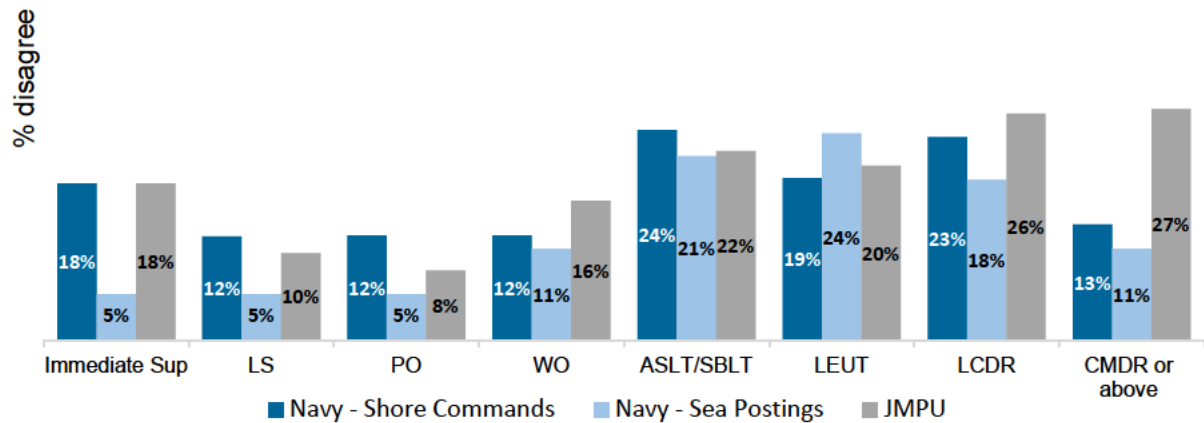The figure below shows the percentage of each workgroup who 'disagree' or strongly disagree' they have confidence in each of the specified leadership levels. **Higher percentages represent lower confidence and therefore areas of potential concern.**

Note: Graph presents proportion of those who **disagree and strongly disagreed** that they have confidence in leadership.

Confidence in leadership across all levels can be improved within all workgroups. Confidence in the leadership of ASLT/SBLT and officers up to LCDR is a particular area for improvement. This was consistent across all workgroups. Other areas of concern are confidence in WO and CMDR and above levels within the JMPU workgroup.

Engaging leadership

The figure below shows the percentage of each workgroup who '**disagree' or 'strongly disagree**' with each item relating to perceptions of their supervisor. **Higher percentages reflect poorer perceptions of their supervisor.**

Note: Graph presents proportion of those who '**disagree' and 'strongly disagreed**'.

Consistent with confidence in leadership results, there is some room for improvement regarding perceptions of leadership engagement for NPC/Os in N-SP and JMPU. The ability of supervisors to enthuse others for their plans is a particular area of weakness. These results further highlight that personnel within all workgroups may benefit from leadership development.
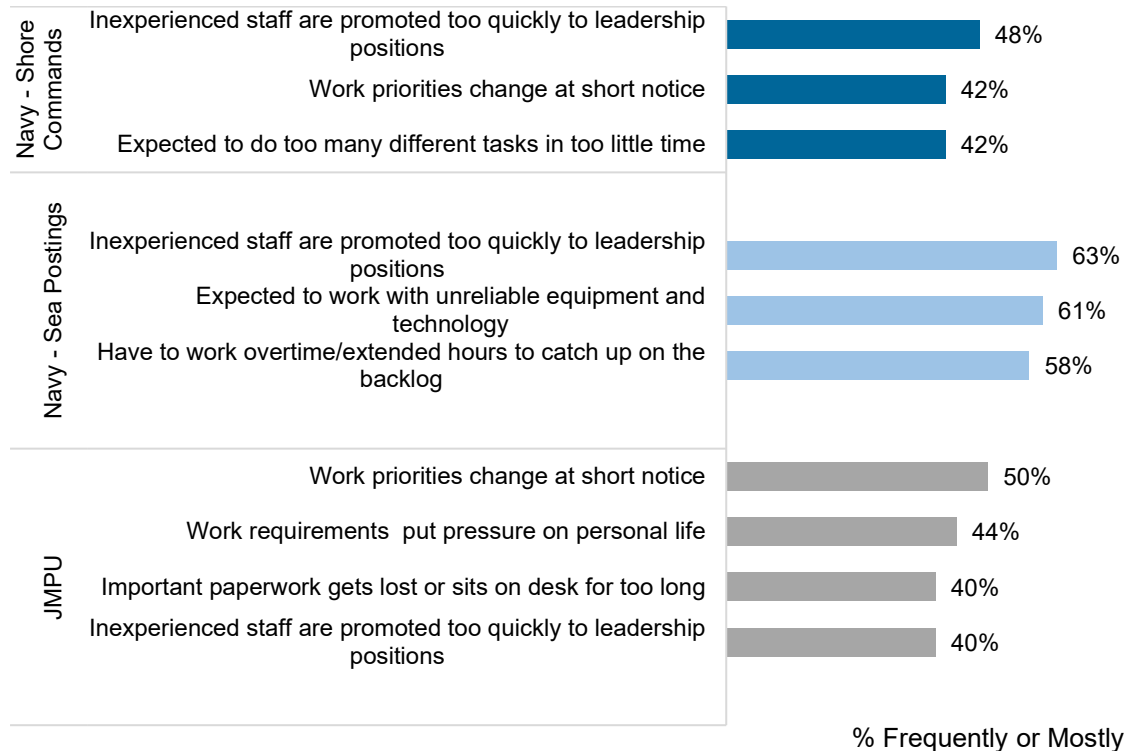
Job Demands

Workplace Hassles

The figure below shows the work place hassles most commonly reported as occurring 'frequently' or 'mostly'. **Higher percentages represent a greater proportion reporting the hassle and therefore greater risk in that area.**

Navy - Shore Commands		
Inexperienced staff are promoted too quickly to leadership positions		48%
Work priorities change at short notice		42%
Expected to do too many different tasks in too little time		42%

Navy - Sea Postings		
Inexperienced staff are promoted too quickly to leadership positions		63%
Expected to work with unreliable equipment and technology		61%
Have to work overtime/extended hours to catch up on the backlog		58%

JMPU		
Work priorities change at short notice		50%
Work requirements put pressure on personal life		44%
Important paperwork gets lost or sits on desk for too long		40%
Inexperienced staff are promoted too quickly to leadership positions		40%

% Frequently or Mostly

NPC/O personnel in N-SP were more likely to report frequent workplace hassles. Inexperienced staff being promoted too quickly to leadership positions was a common hassle reported by NPC/Os in all workgroups. Work priorities changing at short notice was also frequently reported by NPC/Os in both N-SC and JMPU. Working with unreliable equipment and technology appears to be a hassle specific to N-SP.

Negative Organisational Behaviours

Negative organisational behaviours can have adverse consequences for both the individual and the workplace. While most NPC/Os reported 'never' or 'rarely' encountering negative organisational behaviour, some members did. Of particular concern:

- **24%** experienced damaging rumours or gossip 'sometimes', **9%** 'frequently' and **6%** 'most of the time';
- **15%** reported they were deliberately excluded or ignored 'sometimes', with **7%** reporting this 'frequently' and **4%** 'most of the time';
- **11%** experienced humiliation or ridicule 'sometimes' with **6%** experiencing this 'frequently'.
- **10%** experienced offensive or insulting comments 'sometimes'.

A breakdown by workgroup is not provided to maintain anonymity of respondents however, NPC/Os in N-SC and N-SP were more likely to report negative organisational behaviours. The experience of any negative organisational behaviour has the potential for negative consequences at an individual and group level. Command are encouraged to reinforce the importance of a supportive and collaborative work environment for all.

Organisational Motivation

The figure below shows an overview of organisational motivation measures. Organisational Motivation is measured by looking at job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation. Affective commitment refers to a commitment to the organisation due to a sense of personal identification with the ADF/Defence. Continuance commitment represents commitment to the organisation due to perceiving a lack of suitable employment alternatives. **Lower scores on job satisfaction and affective commitment represent lower perceptions of satisfaction and commitment, therefore representing a potential problem area. Continuance commitment is interpreted in conjunction with affective commitment.**
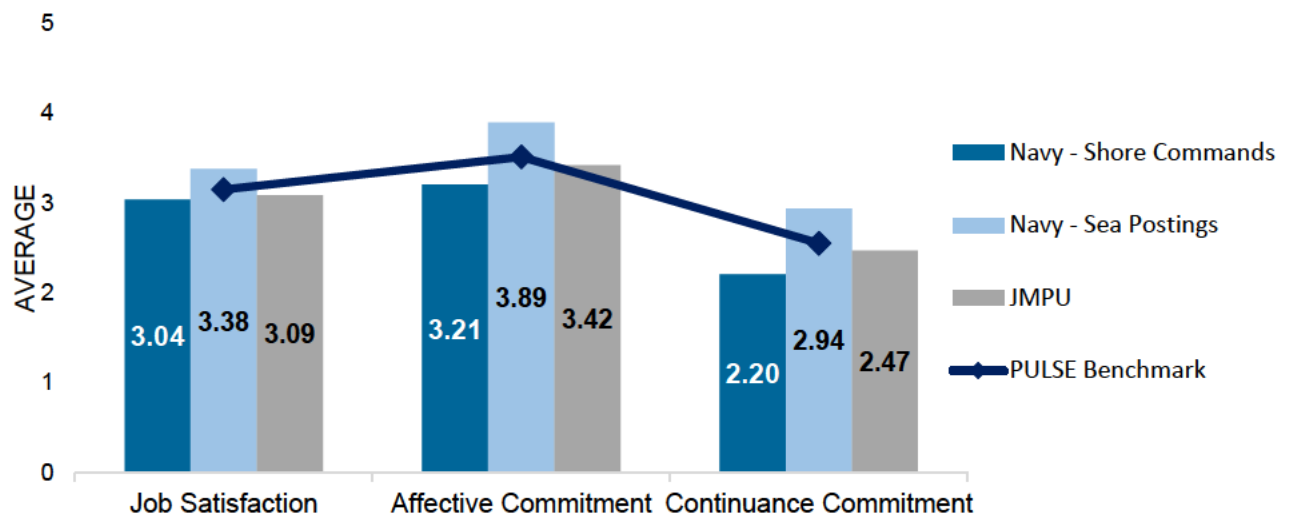
On average, NPC/Os in N-SC and JMPU report a moderate level of job satisfaction, similar to PULSE averages. The combination of low affective commitment and continuance commitment for NPC/O's in in N-SC suggests less emotional attachment to the ADF as well as fewer barriers to leaving. This combination could put this group at risk of retention issues.

NPC/Os in N-SP report higher levels of job satisfaction, affective commitment and continuance commitment. This indicates that while this group might perceive there are barriers to leaving the ADF, this is offset by satisfaction with their jobs and a sense of emotional attachment to the organisation.

Work engagement

The figure below shows proportions of members who reported 'almost never' or 'rarely' on work engagement items for each workgroup. **Higher percentages reflect poorer work engagement.**
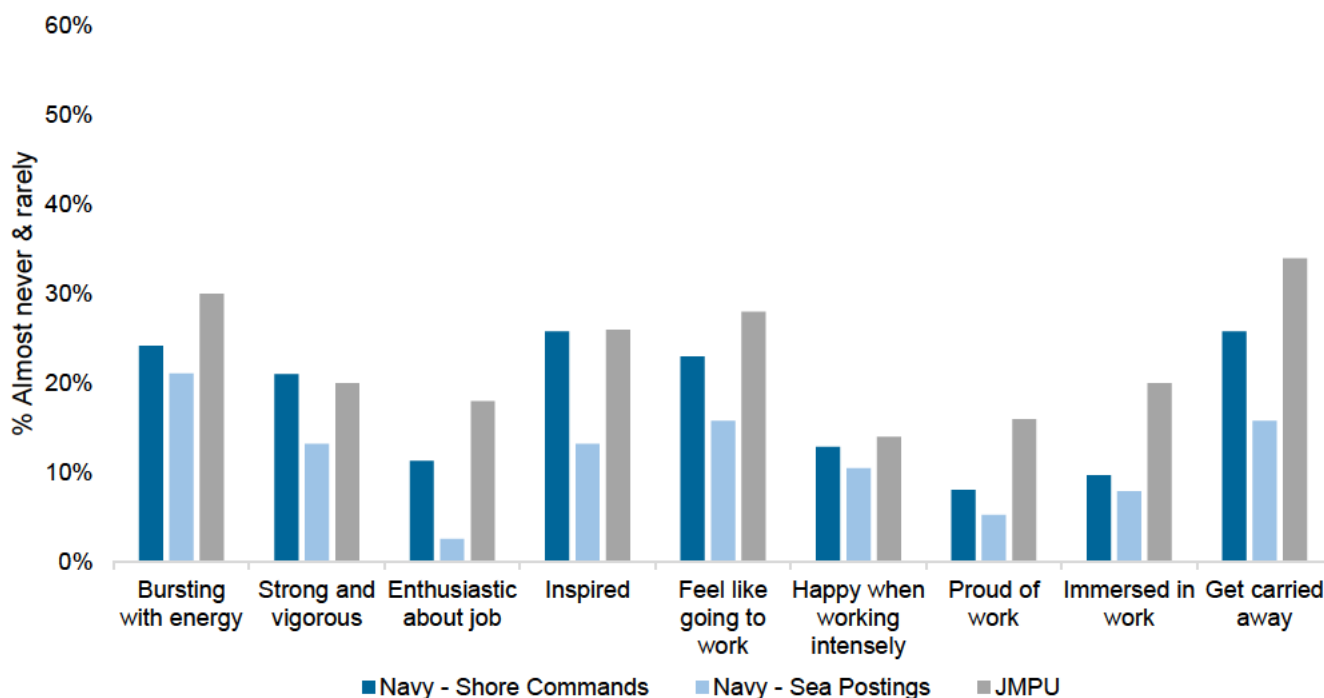
Note: Graph presents proportion of those who reported 'almost never' or 'rarely' for each item

Work engagement was generally high for NPC/Os within N-SC. In particular, a very large proportion of the N-SC group report they are enthusiastic and proud of their work. Work engagement is an area of improvement for NPC/Os within N-SP and JMPU.
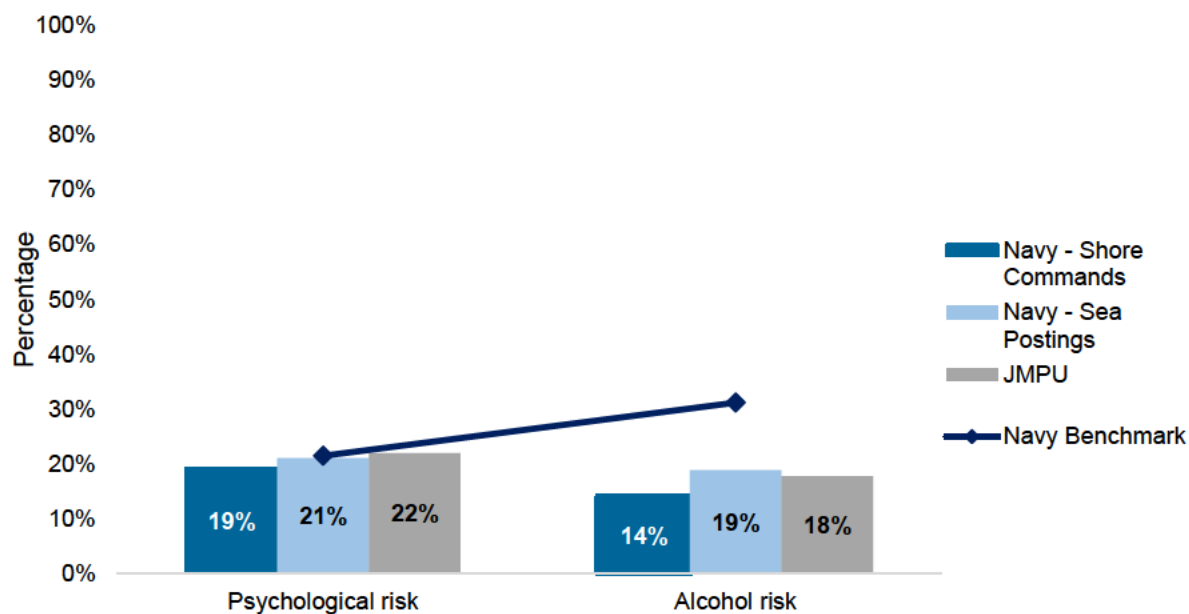
Health and Wellbeing

Psychological Distress and Alcohol Use

The figure below shows the percentage of each workgroup 'at risk' on measures of psychological distress and alcohol use. **Higher percentages indicate a greater number of people reporting psychological and alcohol risk.**

Note: Navy benchmark from the ADF Mental Health and Wellbeing Prevalence Study (McFarlane et al.,2011)

NPC/Os in all workgroups are on par with the benchmark for psychological distress and well below the Navy benchmark for risky drinking behaviour. There are no concerns to highlight for any workgroups.

Burnout

A score of 15 or more on the burnout scale suggests a person feels frustrated, emotionally exhausted and disillusioned with their job. The figure below shows the proportion of each workgroup who reported burnout. **Higher percentages indicate a greater number of people reporting burnout and therefore a potential area of concern.**
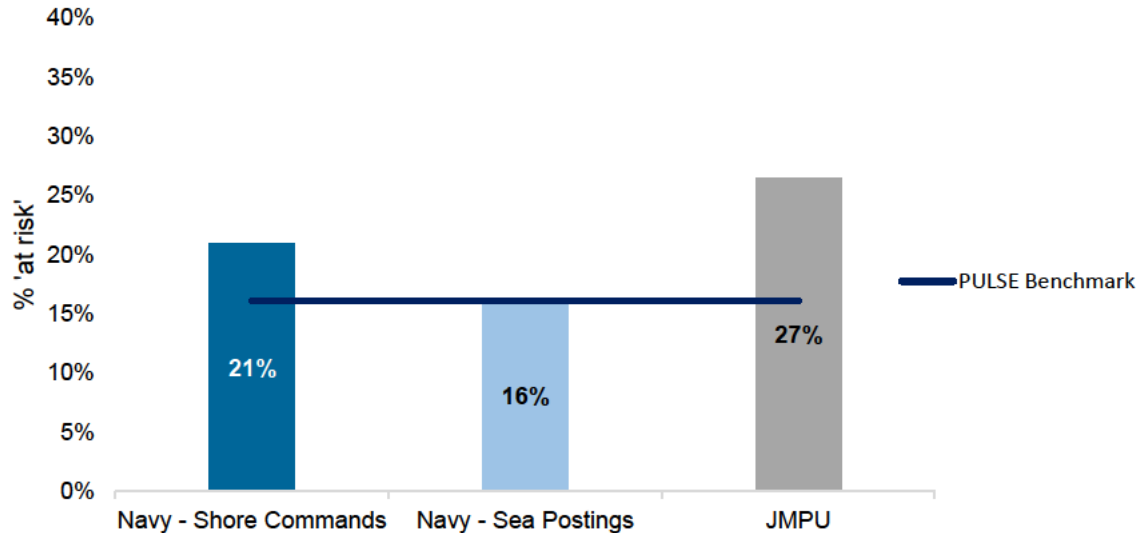
Results indicate burnout is currently a concern for NPC/Os in N-SC and JMPU. Both workgroups report above the PULSE average (16%) for burnout.

Resilience

The figure below displays the resilience score for each workgroup. **A lower score indicates low resilience and a potential area of risk.**
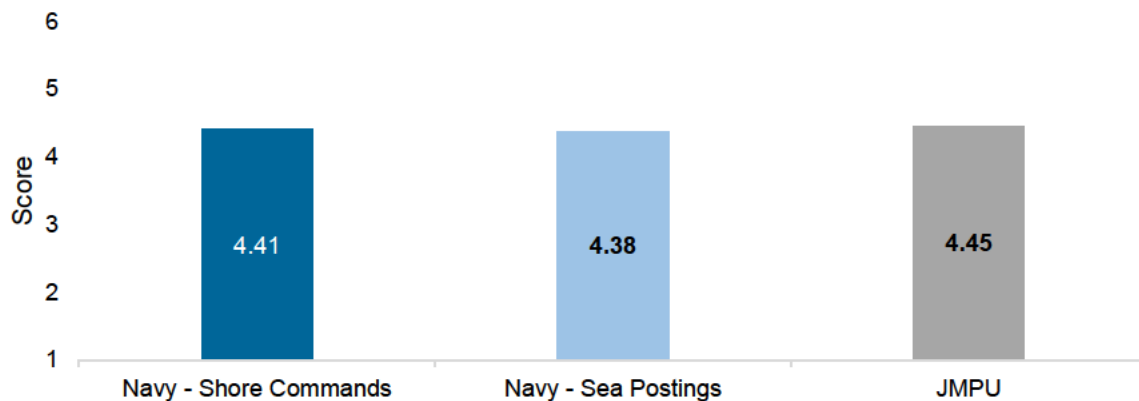

The majority of NPC/Os within all workgroups report resilience in the high range (high range is 4.31-6.00, Smith et al., 2008). This is a positive result.

Work-life balance

The figure below shows the percentage of each workgroup who **disagree** with each of the work-life balance items. **Higher percentages indicate perceptions of poorer work-life balance and are therefore potential areas of risk.**
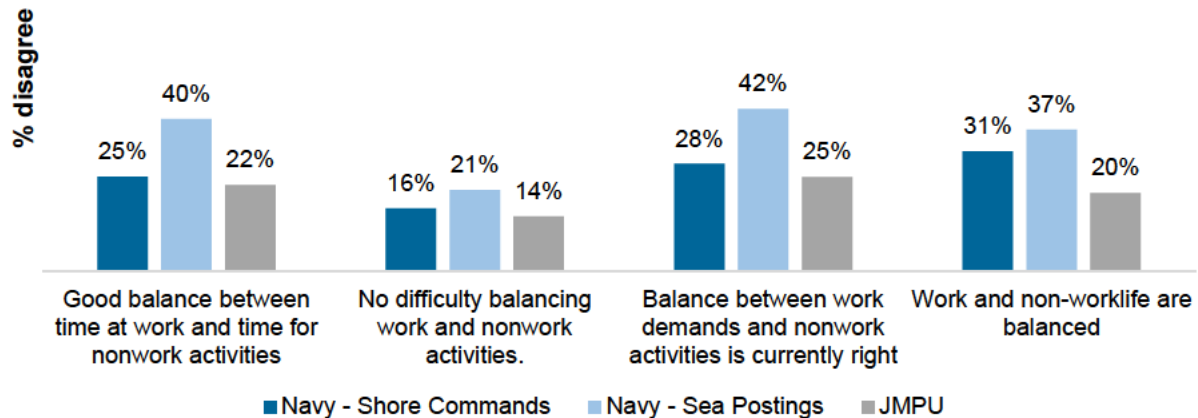
Note: Graph presents proportion of those who **disagree** and **strongly disagreed** with the item.

Work-life balance is an area of improvement for NPC/O personnel within all workgroups. A notable proportion of personnel report poor work-life balance. These results are likely to be related to workload being a commonly reported workplace hassle.

As might be expected, personnel in N-SP, in particular, report poorer work-life balance compared to other workgroups. It is worth noting though that this group also report higher job satisfaction and affective commitment to the ADF.
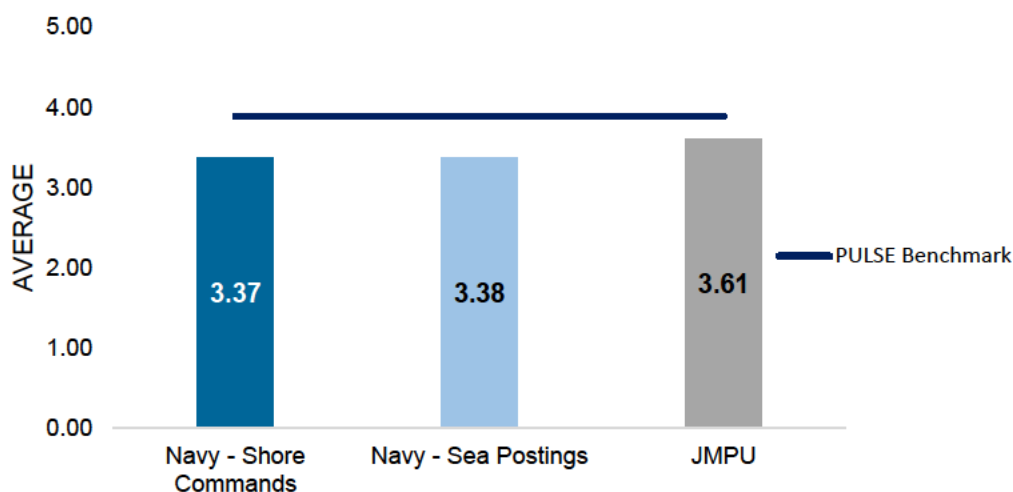
Command are encouraged to pursue whether there are options to reduce workload and continue focusing on health and wellbeing initiatives across all groups.

Job Performance

The figure below shows perceptions of workgroup performance by members of each workgroup. **Lower average scores indicate concern.**

NPC/O personnel within all work groups report slightly below the benchmark for perceptions of their workgroup performance. There is some room for improvement in this area.

Career Intentions

Long term ADF/Defence Career Intentions

The figure below shows long term career intentions reported by members. **A high percentage of personnel reporting a desire to leave now or in the next 1-2 years is a concern.**
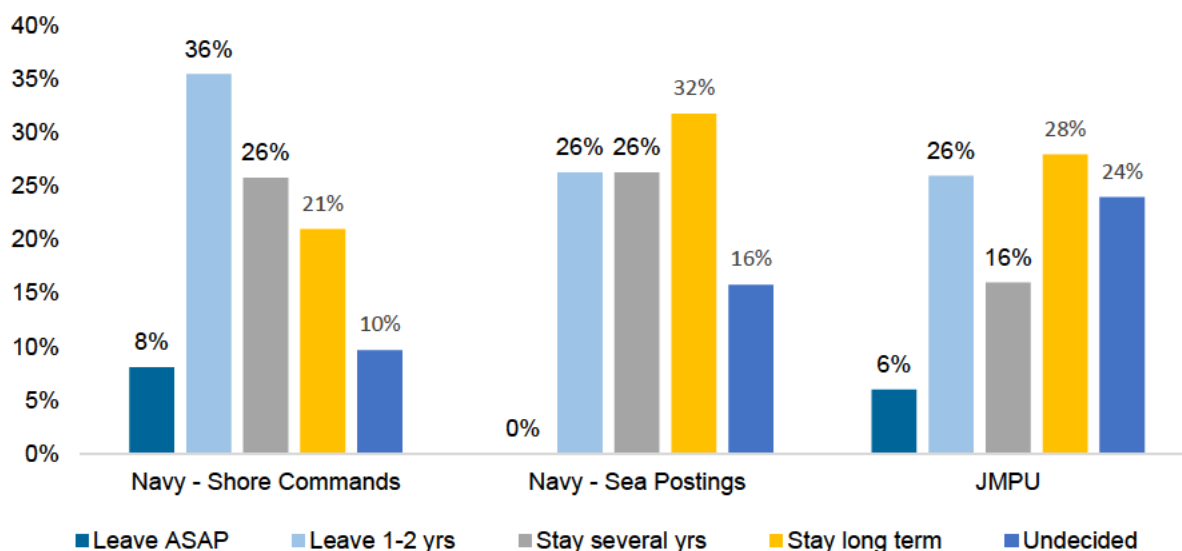
Retention may be a concern for NPC/O in N-SC and JMPU. In particular, 44% of those in N-SC positions reported intentions to leave ASAP or in the next 1-2 years. NPC/O's in N-SP were more likely to report intentions to stay several years or long term.

Workgroup Career Intentions

The figure below shows career desires as reported by members of each workgroup. **A high percentage of personnel reporting a desire to transfer out of the workgroup as soon as possible can be indicative of problems with the organisational climate.**
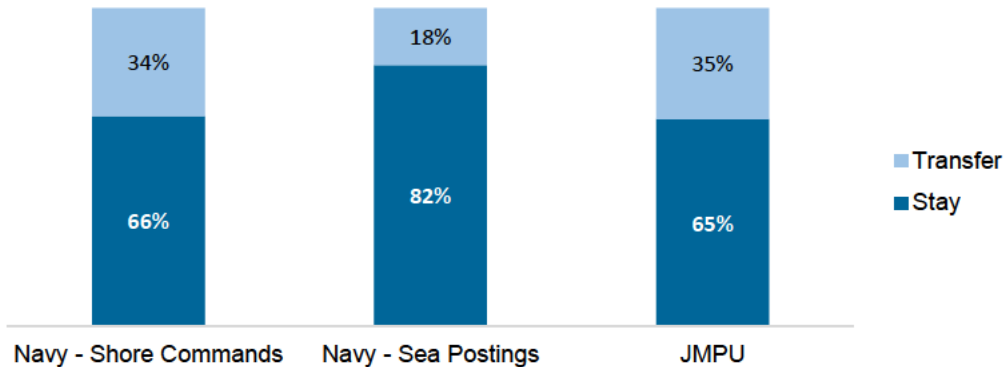

The majority of NPC/O's report they wish to stay within their workgroup. However, a desire to transfer out as soon as possible was higher for NPC/O's in N-SC and JMPU, where just over a third of members reported this. This is potentially related to the higher burnout rates within these workgroups.

Change and Sustain: Comments

The table below lists the most common comment themes provided in the change and sustain comment fields on the PULSE.

SUSTAIN	Count		
Theme	Navy Shore Command	Navy Sea Postings	JMPU
Sea Postings/Roles	16	15	4
Coxswain role	8	6	8
Whole Ship Coordinator Duties	7	8	0
Development Opportunities	6	1	6
People (co-workers)	4	3	5

CHANGE	Count		
Theme	Navy Shore Command	Navy Sea Postings	JMPU
Defining the NPC role or if there will be one	17	10	15
More training/development opportunities	16	7	10
Remove Whole Ship Coordinator duties	8	5	7
Barriers to role and opportunities	6	3	7
Logistics (i.e. align pay scales)	5	1	6
More Sea going opportunities	5	2	2
Leadership	4	3	2

Sustain

- NPC/O's within N-SC and N-SP would like to see sea postings and roles sustained. Most personnel feel roles at sea are a key component of joining the Navy and they would like the opportunity to gain experience at sea.

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Navy Shore Command

- Some personnel across all workgroups would like the coxswain and whole ship coordinator roles sustained within the category. Some examples are provided below:

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– Navy Shore Command

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Navy Sea Postings

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- JMPU

Change

- NPC/O's would like more clarity around the role of the NPC or if it will remain in the future. Some members feel all roles should be absorbed by JMPU and the main focus going forward should be policing and security matters. This links to another common theme of removing the whole ship coordinator duties from the NPC role. However,

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– Navy Sea Postings

- Personnel would like to see more training and development opportunities as well as promotions based on qualifications.

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– Navy Shore Commands

- Barriers to role and opportunity is an area of potential improvement. Some personnel specifically mentioned promotions should not be based on time at sea. Other barriers included "less red-tape hurdles", increasing cohesiveness between the tri-services, and creating better work structures to achieve cohesiveness to allow personnel to perform to the best of their ability.

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JMPU

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Change Management

The figure below shows the percentage of each workgroup who agree with each change management item. **Lower percentages reflect poorer perceptions of change management.**
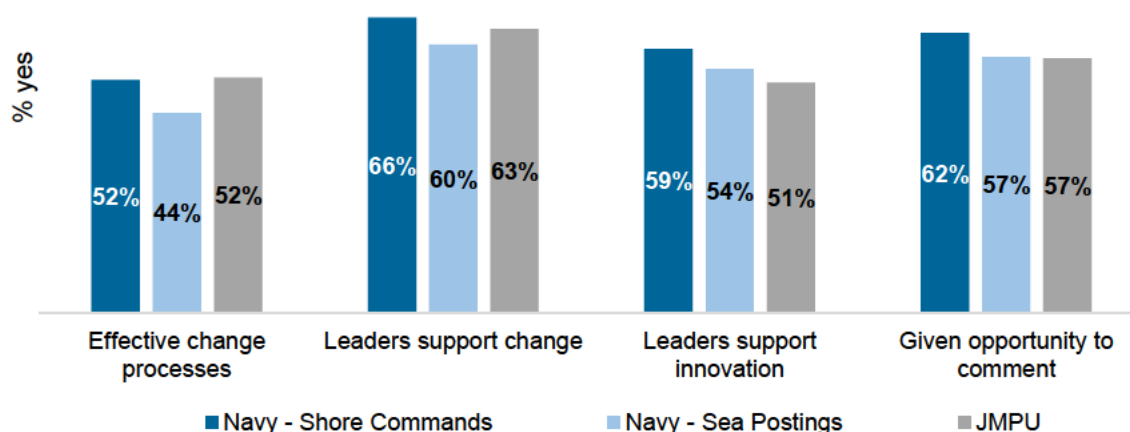
Change management is an area for improvement for NPC/Os across all workgroups. Only half of NPC/O's within each workgroup agree change management processes are effective. There is a perception in a third of personnel that leaders may not support change. A substantial proportion across all workgroups do not feel they have been offered an opportunity to comment on change processes. This may lead to resistance to changes. Command should aim to improve communication around change and its impact on members, as well as providing sufficient opportunity for input.

Organisational specific questions added to the PULSE

Dropping 'Coxswain' term

The following figure presents the percentage of each workgroup who agree Navy should drop the historical term Coxswain from the category name.
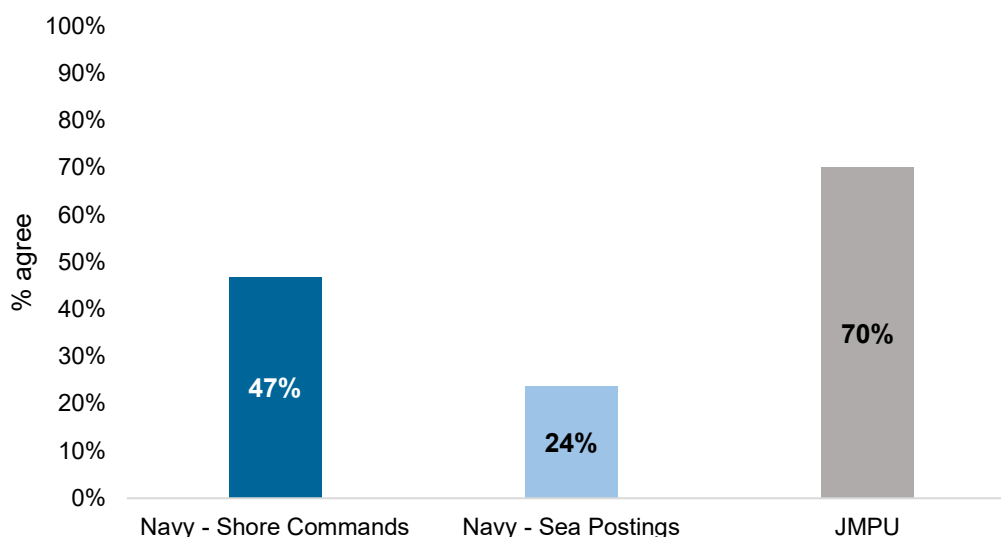
There is a clear divide between workgroups on dropping the term Coxswain from the category name. A majority of NPC/Os in JMPU agree the term should be dropped. Conversely, the majority of NPC/Os in N-SP disagree that the term should be dropped. NPC/Os in N-SC are close to equally divided.

Some members discussed the dropping of the term Coxswain from the category name in their free text comments. Examples are provided below:

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– Navy Shore Command

s47E(d)

– Navy Sea Postings

s47E(d)

- JMPU

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NPC/O Subject Matter Experts

The figure below shows the percentage of the each workgroup who agree the NPC/O workforce should be the subject matter experts across constabulary type operations.
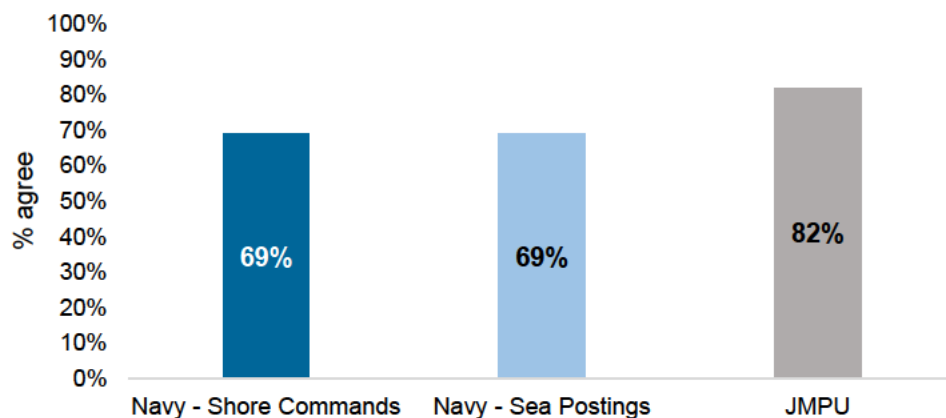
NPC/Os in JMPU were more likely to agree the NPC/O workforce should be the subject matter experts across constabulary type operations.

Personnel were given the opportunity to explain their answer. The table below presents common themes for those who agreed and those who disagreed.

Agree		Disagree	
Theme	**Count**	**Theme**	**Count**
Yes, policing is a core role	42	NPC/O need more development and training first	6
Provide more training	20	Need to review roles within category first	3
Move away from "jack of all trades" approach	15	No, it is a whole of category responsibility	2
Review the role of the category first	15		

Examples are presented below:

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Navy Shore Command

s47E(d)

Navy

Sea Postings

s47E(d)

JMPU

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Future as a Navy Police Member

The table below lists the most common themes emerging when members were asked: *How do you see your future as a professional Navy Police Member?*

Theme	Count		
	Navy Shore Command	Navy Sea Postings	JMPU
No/little future	28	24	19
Would like to progress with career	10	12	13
Dependent on development opportunities (i.e. knowledge gaps and lack of progression)	10	7	5
Dependent on ability to post to sea	8	10	2
Dependent on changes	7	5	7

There was a clear split between personnel indicating they do not see a future for themselves in the category and those who would like to progress with their career. Those who indicated a desire to remain mostly reported commitment to the ADF and career progression as common reasons to remain. Example provided below:

s47E(d)

– JMPU

Those who reported a desire to leave or were undecided indicated the direction of changes in the category would affect their decision. Specifically, changes related to the ability to post out to sea and clarity of the role of the category and NPCs. Examples are provided below:

s47E(d)

Navy Shore Command

s47E(d)

– *Navy Sea Postings*

s47E(d)

- *JMPU*

Next steps

The PULSE provides commanders with a snapshot of the current organisational climate within their unit and highlights areas of concern. This report has highlighted some risk areas within the unit. To gain maximum benefit from the exercise it is important that a number of steps are followed after the PULSE administration.

1. **Participate in a report debriefing.**
   For the Naval Police Coxswain workforce, this debrief will be conducted by a member of the DMHR team and the Director. During this meeting the context of the results of the report can be discussed and any further areas of exploration of the data can be identified.

2. **Communicate results.**
   It is important that the Director then communicate the results to the leadership team and to the NPC/O workforce. Communicating the results not only highlights areas where the leadership team can focus their attention, it also shows personnel that you have heard their feedback and have taken notice. This in itself can have positive implications for organisation climate and can also increase buy-in for future PULSE administrations. DMHR can provide advice about the best way to communicate the results.

3. **Investigate areas of concern using focus groups or interviews (if required).**
   Areas which have been highlighted as high risk can be investigated further to better understand what has contributed to the results obtained. This can be done through focus groups or individual interviews with personnel likely to be impacted by the concerns. DMHR can assist with identifying appropriate points of contact to assist with running focus groups.

4. **Create a plan to address areas of concern.**
   Once the issues are better understood a plan should be developed in conjunction with the relevant leadership team/s to address areas of concern.

5. **Ongoing monitoring.**
   The PULSE in isolation provides a snapshot of the workgroups at one point in time. The tool is best used to monitor changes and compare over time. Given the changes occurring within the NPC/O's workforce and the results of the 2021 PULSE, it is recommended a repeat PULSE be conducted in 2023.

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Author: s47E(d)

Reviewed by: s47E(d)

Released By: s47E(d)

Final version released: 25 AUG 2021

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Saunders, J.B., Aasland, O.G., Babor, T.F., de la Fuente, J.R., & Grant, M. (1993). Development of the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT): WHO collaborative project on early detection of persons with harmful alcohol consumption. II. Addiction, 88, 791-804.

Annex A: Background to the PULSE Survey and Model

INTRODUCTION

1.   The PULSE is a survey requested by Commanders to measure the organisational climate within their unit and subunits. The questionnaire covers a range of issues related to the human component of military capability.

2.   PULSE results are designed to inform Commanders of perceived personnel-related strengths and weaknesses and to provide a framework for future decision making regarding the management of the unit. The PULSE allows the Commander to take a reading of the mix of variables influencing the psychological climate in the unit and to help inform targeted action, if required.

THE ADF PULSE MODEL

3.   The model underlying PULSE is the Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R), first proposed by Demerouti et al. (2001). Shown in Figure 1 is the ADF JD-R model.
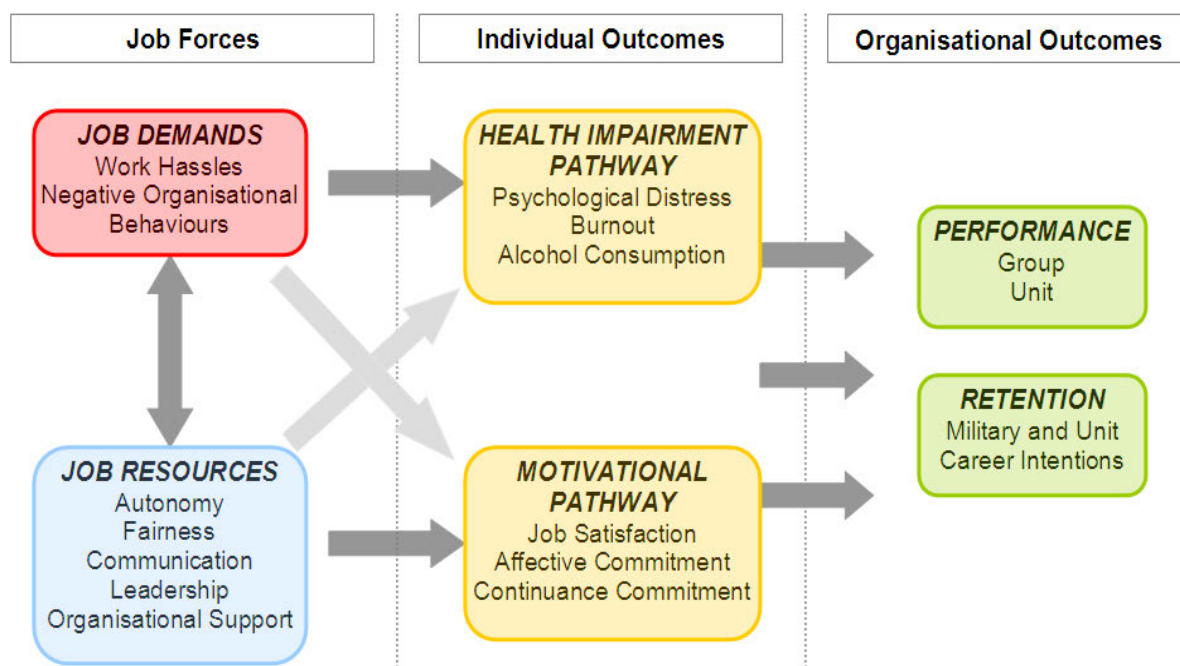
Figure 1. The ADF PULSE Job Demands-Resources Model

Job Forces

4.   The model proposes that there are two basic sets of forces acting on the individual in an organisational setting (in a military context) - Job Demands and Job Resources.

5.   Job Demands include work overload, high tempo, poor conditions, role conflict, and harassment, can lead to physiological and psychological problems for individuals and work groups.

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6.   The second set of forces acting on the individual are called Job Resources. These are factors within the workplace that help an employee deal successfully with job demands and develop into a more capable employee. Examples include confidence in leadership, organisational support, a sense of autonomy, a sense of being treated fairly, and satisfaction with communication across the unit.

7.   Job demands put the individual under pressure and can have a negative impact on the physical and mental health of individuals, while job resources help the individual to cope with that pressure and bolster resilience.

Individual Outcomes

8.   Two components of the PULSE model are described as mediators: Health Impairment and Motivation. Measures of psychological distress, burnout, and alcohol consumption define the Health Impairment Pathway of the model. Measures of organisational commitment and job satisfaction are used to define the Motivational Pathway.

9.   Burnout can be defined as an emotional condition marked by tiredness, loss of interest, or frustration that interferes with job performance. Burnout is usually regarded as the result of prolonged stress. Fogarty (2013) reported that perceived organisational support lowered scores on the Burnout scale (i.e. less burnout and frustration), whereas job demands increased scores.

10.   The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test - C (AUDIT-C) (Saunders, Aasland, Babor, de la Fuente & Grant, 1993) is a three-item scale used to measure alcohol consumption. The responses from the three questions are combined to form an alcohol risk score. A screening cut-off of 6 on the AUDIT-C is used to predict harmful alcohol use.

11.   The ten-item Kessler-10 (K10) scale is used to measure psychological distress (Andrews & Slade, 2001). Results are reported in terms of respondents indicating symptoms that would place them at increased risk of developing a depressive or anxiety disorder. A score over 20 on the K10 indicates increased likelihood of a mental health disorder.

12.   According to the ADF Mental Health Prevalence and Wellbeing Study, 18.1% of ADF members reported a K10 score of 20 or above, and 33.1% of ADF members reported an AUDIT-C score of six or more.

Annex B: Summary of Demographic Information

	Count	Total		Count	Total
NPC/O Workforce			**Years of service in ADF**		
Participants	150	150	0-5	16	16
Deleted cases	-	150	6-10	25	41
Service Type			11-15	26	67
Permanent Force	139	139	16+	75	142
Reserve Force	6	145	Missing data	8	150
Missing data	5	150	**Rank**		
Age			SMN/AB/PTE/AC/LAC/APS1	11	11
<25	7	7	LS/LCP/CPL/APS2	35	46
25-34	36	43	PO/SGT/SSGT/APS3	34	80
35 – 44	50	93	CPO/WO2/FSGT	39	119
45-54	33	126	WO/WO1/WOFF	4	123
55-64	14	140	SBLT/LT/PLTOFF/FLGOFF/APS4	2	125
65+	1	141	LEUT/CAPT/FLTLT/APS5	11	136
Missing data	9	150	LCDR/MAJ/SQNLDR/APS6	4	140
Gender			CMDR/LTCOL/WGCDR/EL1 and above	2	142
Male	94	94	Missing data	8	150
Female	40	134	**Time in Workgroup**		
X	8	142	Less than 1 year	36	36
Missing data	8	150	1-5	69	105
			6-10	16	121
			11-20	11	132
			20+	5	137
			Missing	13	150

Annex C: Mental Health Resources

Defence Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2023:
https://www1.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/Defence_Mental_Health_Wellbeing_Strategy_2018-2023_0.PDF

Table C1. Additional Mental Health Resources for APS Employees.

Contact Information	
Emergency	000
Lifeline	13 11 14
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800
MensLine Australia	1300 789 978
Suicide Call Back Service	1300 659 467
Defence Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	1300 687 327
NewAccess	02 6287 8066 (Canberra) 1800 010 630 (South Australia) 02 6923 3195 (Riverina/Murrumbidgee) 1300 137 934 (North Coast NSW)
Resources	
Mental Health Toolkit	https://objective/id:AB31483168

Table C2. Additional Mental Health Resources for ADF Members.

Contact Information	
Military Chaplains	1300 333 362
ADF Mental Health All-hours Support Line	1800 628 036 (from Australia) +61 2 9425 3878 (from overseas)
1800 IMSICK (to locate support when away from base/out of hours)	1800 467 425
Defence Family Helpline	1800 624 608
Open Arms - Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service	1800 011 046
Resources	
HeadStrength App	Download via ForceNet: https://www.forcenet.gov.au/
ADF Health and Wellbeing Portal	www.defence.gov.au/health/healthportal
Defence Community Organisation	www.defence.gov.au/dco
ADF Transition Support Service	http://drnet/People/TSS/Pages/Transition-Support-Services.aspx
Engage – Supporting Those Who Serve	https://engage.forcenet.gov.au/
Defence Mental Health Factsheets	https://www1.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/health-well-being/services-support-fighting-fit/fact-sheets