

SENATE INQUIRY INTO THE CAPABILITY OF DEFENCE'S PHYSICAL SCIENCE ENGINEERING (PSE) WORKFORCE

08 Sept 2015

ENGINEERING IS AS SYSTEM

1. Engineering is a system, not an individual with an Engineers Australia Tie and a Degree.
2. Engineering as a system consists of:
 - a. Engineering Trades Apprentices.
 - b. Engineering Trades people.
 - c. Engineering Technical Officers.
 - d. Engineering Design Drafts people.
 - e. Engineers.

Engineers alone can not provide an effective Engineering outcome without Engineering Trades Apprentices, Trades people, Technical Officers and Design Drafts people.

3. Navy no longer has civilian Engineering Trades Apprentices or Engineering Trades people. That all stopped with the change from Garden Island to ADI.
4. Navy still has a few of the old experienced Engineering Technical Officers and Engineering Design Drafts people, who were once trades people, but they are all nearing retirement. Please note the Engineering Design Drafts people were down graded to Technical officers in the mid 1990s during wage negotiations.
5. Numerous cut backs from all Governments from the early 1990s to the present have caused a **huge generation gap** in Naval Engineering. This has left a gaping hole in the corporate knowledge in Naval Engineering not easily filled by the young inexperienced engineers that are meant to replace the experienced Technical officers. Sadly they will never have our experience, skills or abilities.
6. Contractors have been brought in to fill some of the gaps. Contractors do the work to provide profit to their share holders. The APS work for our Government & our Country. **Naval Engineering Standards** have been relaxed to accommodate the Contractors. (HMAS Westralia – **Fire, Deaths**, HMAS Manoora – **Fire, loss of power**, 1x Armadale class patrol boat **lost due to Fire**)
7. DMO/Navy has been aware over the last 15 years of the Engineering situation from our replies from the many surveys we were asked to complete.
8. In 2000 all APS 3 (TO2) positions in CME were abolished. Due to the many cut backs over the years, many Technical Officers retired or moved on, many positions were left unfilled. During the period 2008 to 2011 these positions were either moved to Canberra or abolished. Is Defence trying to get rid of us?

9. 2012 or 13 Navy enlists Rizzo to write a report on the state Naval Engineering and what is required to rectify it.
10. 2013 New Government launches the First Principles Review of the APS to reform in the public service.
11. Rizzo Report is released saying DMO/Navy needs to increase its Engineering personnel and skills.
12. Not long after, DMO released an internal study that states APS personnel are more cost effective than Contractors or Uniformed personnel doing the same job.
13. The First Principles Review is released 2014 which states DMO have to lose personnel. Some what at odds with the Rizzo Report and DMO's internal study.
14. 2014 DMO was told to prioritise its work force by level of operational importance.
15. July 2015 the employees in my organisation based in Sydney discovered that their positions are unfunded. In other words, to be abolished. The employees affected are 19 APS 5 & 6, listed as priority 2 & 3. The Engineers (EL1 & 2) and the clerk (APS 6) were priority 1. (See paragraphs 11, 12 & 13) We were told this occurred due to a clerical error. (?) This is not the first time Defence has abolished Technical Officer Positions in Navy. (See Paragraph 8)
16. Since July 2015 six positions have apparently been refunded. We are still waiting for the other 11 positions as two positions appear to have been abolished. We are told the request to fund these remaining positions has gone up to a 4 star level for approval for funding. Due to past experience we view this with a healthy scepticism.
17. Over the last 15 years Defence, DMO & Navy have all been saying how important Naval Engineering is. I believe this is misinformation. It certainly isn't reflected in our latest negotiations for our "**unpay**" rise. The Government and Defence want to **cut our pay and conditions!** No wonder we feel like second class citizens. (See paragraphs 8 & 15)
18. Over the last 10 years or so we Defence employees have taken lower wage rises and traded away conditions to assist DMO/Navy meet their political obligations, especially during the Global Financial Crisis. No more. The gene pool of qualified technical officers and corporate knowledge base is getting smaller.

Contractors head hunt technical people from Defence, they don't train their own.

19. Please be aware that a decline in the Engineering System in Defence reflects what is happening in the rest of Australia. The gene pool of experienced trades' people is getting smaller as well. TAFE colleges are becoming money making schools that no longer exist to assist build national infrastructure.

Who am I?

My name is John Michael Pozza. I have worked in Engineering for 35 years, from indentured apprentice to Engineering Design Draftsman. I have worked in Defence for 25 years.

I am one of 9 technical officers with an Engineering Design background left in Centre for Maritime Engineering (CME) based in Sydney. The youngest is 52 years old. The oldest is well over 65. We shall all retire within the next six years. Five or six of those, will retire within the next 3 years. Four of us have one or multiple forms of chronic illness including Cancer. We are getting tired.

Qualifications:

Coppersmith Tradesman – Trades Certificate.

Engineering Design Draftsman – Associate Diploma (Electrical Engineering)

Licensed Electrician.

Technical Officer 3 – Mechanical Engineering.

Eight years service in the Australian Army Reserve.

Sincerely

John M. Pozza

APS 3 = Technical Officer 2

APS 5 = Technical Officer 3

APS 6 = Technical Officer 4